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Saving the stage

Beijing may be where it's at for new rock, but the local scene is not without its problems. Though they sell out every weekend, the city's "live houses" never break even. But some venue operators say it's a worthy sacrifice for the sound.

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Modern art's origins

Zhang Nian puzzled Ritan park-goers for 45 minutes as he "hatched" an ice egg, the latest in his egg-themed installations. He and other masters from the 1980s have reunited to examine the development of modern art in China since their debut.

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Rent, don't buy
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Questionable food licenses revoked, including Sanlu's

By Venus Lee

The government canceled 768 food production licenses of 720 enterprises, according to an announcement by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ). The list of companies includes the now infamous Sanlu Group and Guangzhou Jinding Dairy Products, both involved in last year's melamine scandal.

The latest list of canceled food production licenses covers numerous baby formula, dairy products, beverages, meat products, ice cream, rice, canned foodstuffs, edible oil and cookie makers. Among them, the Shijiazhuang-based Sanlu Group's license was canceled. This license covered dairy products including

sterilized milk, yogurt and whole milk powder.

Fengning Sanlu Dairy Company's license for producing baby and infant formula was passively revoked by refusing an extension of the expiration date.

The Sanlu incident has not been forgotten, and two other dairy groups, Mengniu and Dumex, are under intense scrutiny after consumers accused the two of shirking safety duties.

Pu Jiabin, director of external affairs for Dumex Baby Food, said government-certified laboratories conducted spot checks on 2,651 batches of Dumex products since April 2007 after reports that dozens of babies who drank Dumex baby formula developed renal failure

last September.

However, Dumex was proved melamine-free according to AQSIQ's report Tuesday, which stated there was "no evidence of melamine in Danone's Dumex baby formula."

AQSIQ has prohibited Mengniu from using two chemical additives – osteobas milk protein (OMP) and IGF-1 – in its Telusu brand.

"OMP aides the absorption of calcium and promotes bone growth. It is commonly used in other countries under the name of 'Milk Basic Protein' or MBP," Zhao Yuanhua, Mengniu spokeswoman, said in response to the ban. But AQSIQ said OMP was an unapproved protein additive, although it is not harmful.

The government has tried to monitor the use of additives in food products. Last December, the Ministry of Health released a list of substances banned from food. The list included chemicals used in industrial dyes, insecticides and drain cleaners. But OMP and IGF-1 are not on the list, nor are they on a list of approved additives.

Last year, six Chinese infants were killed and 300,000 hospitalized with kidney stones and other ailments from baby formula contaminated with melamine, the Ministry of Health said. Two people were sentenced to death for their roles in the contamination, and the ex-chairwoman of Sanlu Group, the heart of the scandal, was jailed for life.

Gov bans actors from medical shows

By Han Manman

The government has banned actors and celebrities from appearing in radio and television medical advertisements to stop marketing schemes that involve fraudulent or exaggerated claims.

The order barring appearances by people without medical qualifications was issued by five government departments, according to a notice on the Web site of the government's State Administration of Radio Film and Television Tuesday (SARFT).

The order comes after local newspapers and Internet users recently exposed a number of bogus experts and patients.

A Chinese Internet user late last month exposed 12 fake experts selling medicine under various guises and names on television in eastern Shandong Province.

One actress was singled out by a newspaper for playing different patients and claiming at various times that she had suffered from lung, liver, kidney and heart problems. She always testified that her ailment was cured by whatever medicine she was advertising.

"The actors and celebrities appearing in fake advertisements are mainly in medical products," Yan Zhifeng, from Shiguang Plastic Surgery Hospital, said. "As far as I know, many celebrities who accepted such medical advertisements did not ask about the curative effects of the product. They only cared about how much money they would get."

The government said impersonating experts or patients is misleading, and non-accredited personnel are banned from televised advertisements and health programs.

Further breaches will result in the nullification of advertisers and companies' advertising licenses and "temporary suspensions of sales for their medicinal products," the government circular said.

SARFT has tried to clean up the advertising industry through advertising bans for local companies whose drugs and health products fail to meet standards.

Its most famous case was in 2007, when SARFT exposed Yilishen, a company that made an aphrodisiac from ants in an alleged pyramid scheme involving thousands of farmers. The company had advertised its products on television using famous comedian Zhao Benshan.

Fake drug and food quality scandals continue, despite regulators' promises to crack down on offenders.

Repairs begin on Jinshui Bridge



By Jin Zhu

Repairs on the Jinshui Bridge, between the Tiananmen gate and square, began Wednesday in preparation for the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Repair and maintenance work will continue until May 1, after which the bridge will reopen to the public.

According to Tiananmen management, the repairs will not change the look of the bridge. They will replace cement mortar

from the bridge floor, mend several stones and rebuild the bridge railings.

Since the repair work will be done in stages, it will not affect visitors' access, management said.

Photo by Tom Huang

China to launch its own 'Google Earth'

By Han Manman

The government has started work on its own 3D Internet-based mapping system to provide high resolution satellite photos to domestic users.

The program, launched by the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, is an equivalent of "Google Earth," a global mapping server made by the Mountain View, California-based Internet giant.

"Google Earth only provides high resolution pictures taken from North America and Europe," said Chen Jing, assistant professor from State Key Laboratory of Infor-

mation Engineering in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing.

Unlike the photos presented by Google Earth, the pictures provided by the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping would be higher resolution and cover more territory – as long as the land is not subject to serious security restrictions, Chen said.

"We have an edge in building a domestic geographic database in that we can collect better pictures from our global position system (GPS) or from the sky," she said.

Previously, the government

had tight restrictions on geographic photos taken at a resolution greater than 30 meters. But the launch of Google Earth, which brought the company nearly 6.84 billion yuan worth of advertising revenue, featured pictures with a resolution of 0.6 meters at best. Google's success has inspired China, Chen said.

She also said both the government and society at large needs access to more authoritative and reliable online geographic information.

"We can provide pictures not involving confidential informa-

tion to the public to meet market demand," Chen said.

A research group led by Li Deren, an academician from the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, has designed a program called "Geo Globe," which deals with the data collected, including 3D pictures, aerial photos and information concerning borders, railways and aircraft routes.

Geo Globe is in testing, and is being used by Heilongjiang Geographic Information System and the National Defence Department. The technology is awaiting approval from the State Council.

Patients see doctors for a VIP price

By Wang Yu

The registration sections of big city hospitals have been a perennial problem for residents. Many people needing to see a doctor get in line to take a number around midnight and wait until mid-day for their appointment.

Tianjin residents recently found the front desk of Tianjin Children's Hospital selling new "appointment cards" alongside the usual registration tickets.

iKang, a health management company, is selling the cards for its appointment services at several hospitals. Its three card levels

include a "Convenience Card," "Easy Card" and "VIP Card," which are priced 68, 158 and 1,600 yuan respectively.

If you are willing to shell out the cash, a VIP card can guarantee a priority appointment with the hospital's doctors and access to its VIP room. Repeat visits to senior doctors in Beijing and Shanghai are also available.

According to the salesman in the hospital, parents who purchase an "Easy Card" or "VIP Card" for their children are not required to wait in line to register. Usually, the hospital asks patients to wait in line outside the doc-

tor's consultation room, though iKang cardholders are permitted to cut to the front. The VIP room is well-decorated and has a sofa and television.

It is not the first time quick appointments with medical experts were given a special price tag. Unbalanced development of the medical system has made the rich get richer and the poor wait in long lines to see doctors who are taxed with far more patients than they can handle. Scalpers have made a business of snatching the morning's first tickets and reselling the low-number appointments

at high prices.

Companies like iKang are operating throughout the country. Wang Suhong, director of iKang's health department, said the company has registered 2,000 cardholders at Tianjin Children's Hospital.

"An expert doctor can only see 30 patients per day, so our online appointment system helps clients who have money, but not the time to wait in line for a ticket," Wang said. Patients in Beijing can also buy a similar card service on iKang's Web site, which will give them priority appointment access to local hos-

pitals' experts.

But for most people in need of medical care, the business is unfair. iKang's business bears a striking resemblance to a hospital-approved scalper.

Cai Shengxia, a professor at Nankai University, said that as part of the national medical resource allocation, state-owned hospitals are expected to pay attention to equality. Such an appointment service will help patients only if offered for free by the government to all, instead of allowing a third-party to profit from the medical system's structural woes.

Old military liaison office will become an art salon



On Monday, the consul general of British Consulate General in Chongqing, Nick Whittingham visited the site of an old Anglo-Chinese military liaison office which was constructed around 1915 and functioned as intelligence exchange office during China's War of Resistance against Japan. The building will be transformed to an art salon in British style. Whittingham said the British Consulate General in Chongqing will support the project, and can contract a British expert to do the interior design.

(By Venus Lee)

Prisoner dies in perilous game of hide-and-seek

By Huang Daoheng

A man died while playing "duo mao mao," or "hide from the cat," a game similar to hide-and-seek, while in a detention center in Yunnan Province, local police said.

Li Qiaoming, 24, the deceased, was from Yuxi Beicheng in Yunnan's Puning County and was arrested for cutting down trees without authorization on January 30, according to the *Yunnan Information Times*.

After 11 days in detention, Li's parents were informed that their son was seriously wounded and was taken to the hospital. A few days later, on February 12, Li died. The official report said the cause of death was "severe brain injury."

The local public security bureau said Li was injured while playing the game with other prisoners. A participant allegedly pushed Li hard into a wall, after which he fell. Police said the man was angry Li found his hiding-spot.

Another local paper reported that Li was blindfolded while playing and was injured when he ran into the wall.

Li's family and many in the Chinese blogosphere find the story hard to believe. "Hiding from the cats" is a latest Internet catch the phrase.

"I thought that he might have committed suicide after being caught for something. I never imagined they would say he died while playing hide-and-seek!" Li Rui, a Beijing resident who had been following the story, said. "It's hard to imagine."

As of press time, the police in Puning County have declined comment, citing an ongoing investigation.

It is not the first time Chinese netizens have created a viral phrase to draw attention to suspicious news.

Last year, a girl Li Shufen in Guizhou Province was rumored to have been killed by relatives of local police. The official report said the girl's boyfriend was "doing push-ups" when she committed suicide by jumping into the river.

Taobao.com bans sellers of fake goods

By Wang Yu

Dealers in fake products on Taobao.com may face hard times: the country's biggest trade Web site has adjusted its policies to fight sellers of low-quality or fake products. Online shops involved in such cases will be closed and their user account will be permanently disabled.

The move was the company's reaction to a case last week where fake luxury goods were sold. The Taobao.com shop "Champs-Élysées" was found selling fake LV, Dunhill and Gucci products, among clones of other luxury brands.

Taobao.com closed the shop and its products were confiscated by the commerce department of Haidian

District. The public security bureau is investigating the shop owner.

To ban dealing in fakes, Taobao.com will implement both manual and automatic checking of products listed in its index. It has built a database of reference prices of popular products. If the price fluctuation drops below a certain level, the listing will be automatically deleted. It also opened a new surveillance department of 50 employees who will supervise listings around the clock.

Customers who were sold fake products are asked to complain to Taobao.com. The seller will be required to submit evidence of the product's authenticity. All sellers on Taobao.com are required to

register with their legal name and provide a copy of their ID cards, which may help the Web site track down offenders.

To prevent these sellers from using the ID of a friend or family member to register, Taobao.com said the Web site will also block the user's IP address.

According to statistics from iResearch, the domestic online shopping market includes some 98 million people who move 120 billion yuan of merchandise per year. As much as 80 percent of this trade occurs on Taobao.com.

Online shops have become a new distribution channel for counterfeit goods. Both sellers and customers have a mutual under-

standing on fake products: "You get what you pay for. Everyone knows that a pair of real Adidas shoes cannot be sold for 200 yuan. From electric gadgets to clothing, you can find cheap knock-offs of almost every big brand," Vincent Wen, a long time Taobao.com shopper, said.

There are 10 million new listings every day, which makes the market difficult to survey. Due to the lack of right to supervision and control, Websites have to cooperate with local commerce departments. The authorities tried to require online sellers to apply for business license last year, but the draft regulation has not been put into use and has not been adopted by other main cities.

Surviving on stage

By Wang Yu

Compared to 20 years ago, Beijing's night-life has far more to offer: especially for live music fans with diverse tastes.

Legions of listeners hail the now as a new peak in the city's music scene. Club owners may agree, but there are problems going on behind the stage. The live music venues are losing money, and not even the owners know when they can transite from music charities to part of the music business.

Star Live, one of Beijing's most reputable live music venues, rocked to the earsplitting power chords and fierce drums of American metal band Symphony X last Friday night. The venue was divided into three tiers of ticket prices. But since the audience who bought tickets for the central area occupied only half the section, it left an embarrassing gap between the metal maniacs in the front and the younger fans howling from behind the barrier.

Granted, hardcore metal and punk have hardly left a footprint on China's live music scene, or even the local scene in the past five years. But the city's tastes have changed, and Beijing's live clubs have shed their raw, underground image to seemingly flourish, at least

on the surface.

Generation of change

"The first live show I ever attended was Gaoqi at the Rhine River Sound Stage beside the Beijing Film Academy in 1999. But the place was too small for a rock show," Lua Zhou, senior editor of *INMUSIC* magazine, said. At that time, new music, especially rock, had come full circle in a rise and fall.

Zhou and her generation grew up with the young music scene after China's economic reforms in the 1980s, but few of them were there to witness its early peak. In the early 1990s the hottest rock venue in town was Maxim's, a restaurant located by Chongwenmen, which was opened with an investment from French fashion designer Pierre Cardin.

Beijing artists knew the restaurant not for its menu but for serving as the hub of the local music scene.

Many of China's pioneer rock artists including Cui Jian, now called the godfather of Chinese rock, staged their earliest acts at Maxim's. The restaurant faded into obscurity when it became state-owned in 1998.

From 1993 to 2006, the action was at Club X, Busy Bee, NASA, Rhine River Sound Stage, Scream Club and 13 Club. These Sanlitun and Wudaokou bars each had their own style, but most were metal or punk. Some like Scream Club opened only one year before shifting to become a record label. Brain Failure, Xie Tianxiao and Flow-ers, mainstream or not, made their debuts at those clubs.

Simple Plan took local fans by storm at New Get Lucky club in 2005 with a professional performance.

Photos by Jin Yuxin

Costly dreams

2006 was a turning point.

When D-22 and Star Live opened that summer, it ushered in a time of venues made specifically for live performance. "Unlike the early clubs, these live houses have professional sound and lighting systems. They are not bars with bands but are designed only for live shows in rooms which can hold an average 300 people," Li Tong, manager of MAO live house, said.

Li Chi, owner of MAO, first saw the "live house" model used in Japan, where he was stunned by its popularity and mature marketing system. MAO was

founded in cooperation with Bad News Records, a Japanese record company in 2007 at East Gulou Avenue: downtown.

"Our iron door was declared in violation of regulations by the planning committee that oversaw the ancient street, but we still have it. Every live house operator has faced similar problems. The only thing we worried about was how MAO could attract bands and an audience," Li Tong said. But MAO's originality and superior sound courtesy of its Japanese engineer made it a success.

Gouzi, founder of Yugong

Yishan, already had a good reputation in the music scene before he relocated his venue in 2007. The old house was scheduled for pre-Olympic demolition.

He started Yugong Yishan in 2005 after he came back from Germany in 1999 and his live house was operated by an international team including a stage director from France. The team is one of the most distinct changes in the current club scene, where well-formed management teams have replaced charismatic bar owners as promoters.

"But we are still losing

money," Charles Saliba, manager of D-22, said. Almost every live house owner admitted the same. The financial situation sucks, even though they pack the house week after week.

"Millions of yuan has been thrown at the business. God only knows when and whether we can make it back," Li Tong said. "Even the monthly income of the small neighboring restaurant far exceeds our own."

The problem partly lies in the mission of the live house. Unlike a bar, which can always attract customers, no one goes to a live house unless there is a

band, and the people who go to live shows are rarely going for the drinks.

"Chinese fans don't usually buy drinks inside the club when they see a show. The only way we earn money is through ticket sales. A weekend show at MAO costs 50 yuan, so even if we get 300 people, which is a lot, that's only 15,000 yuan for the night. It takes more than that to pay the organizers and artists," Li Tong said.

"We do this because we love music. So far, no one is in it for the money," Huang Shuguo, who runs What Club, said.

Will live shows save music?



Yeah Yeah Yeahs were the final act at Modern Sky Festival 2007. More famous foreign artists are choosing to perform in Beijing in recent years.

The Internet is a huge threat to the record industry, and in China the conditions are even worse. New technology makes it easy for more people than ever before to enjoy music, but it has made the CD nothing more than collectible junk. "Looking at a number like 1.3 billion people, have Chinese record labels ever been profitable?" Gouzi said.

The Internet has helped spread music, especially works by independent musicians, to the masses. More people are involved in the scene, which is good news for the live show business: it means more people going to clubs.

"The majority of the audience used to be students and other musicians. You saw the same faces at every concert. Now we have more different styles and more people from all kinds

of fields—from civil servants to police officers," Lua Zhou of *INMUSIC* magazine said. And these audiences are open to more types of music: from Folk to Electronic.

Some live house operators think this change marks an opportunity, and hope their venues can turn a profit in the local scene. "The draw of rock music is in live concerts," Li Tong said. Neither MAO nor the new Yugong Yishan has been decorated to follow what the media says is trendy, and that break from the norm attracts many office workers seeking new surroundings after hours.

"No matter how convenient the Internet gets, there is no replacement for live music," said Ding Taisheng, marketing and communication manager of Modern Sky, one of the lead-

ing independent record labels in China.

Small clubs like What Club and 2 Kolegas Bar are ideal stages for new bands, and they may move to Yugong Yishan or Star Live in a few years after the new bands build their reputation. Beijing is home to more than 2,000 bands, but few band members are professional musicians.

Ten years ago, "Si Ke," loosely translated as "stay reckless," was the motto of young musicians. But this generation can hardly be content with living in a room with cardboard walls on the edge of the city for their music.

Today's musicians relegate their music to their hobby time after work, which cuts into the quality of their shows. "Very few musicians can make a career

out of performing. I think if you push a band into doing more frequent shows, then you will see a problem of low box office turn out," Ding said.

Li Tong also admitted members of Perdel, a full-time band signed with MAO, play cover songs in normal bars so they can earn money, and some members require the support of their families and girlfriends on top of that.

China's live music scene is still under-developed. It has gone from having nothing to having the basics of a music scene: a record industry and venues for live shows.

"But there's more to it than that," Gouzi said. "To succeed we need to do two things: build a system and look for our place in it. Only after that can we then talk about the future."

Crackdown on tourist organ transplants

The phrase "transplant tour" re-emerged after the Ministry of Health announced an investigation on 17 transplants for Japanese tourists. The ministry said Tuesday that there will be a crackdown on tourist organ transplants.

Foreigners visiting China will no longer be allowed or will find it harder to receive organ transplants, according to the Ministry of Health.

"Due to the lack of organ donors, shortage of organs is a problem in all countries, not just China. Priority must be given to domestic patients in urgent need of an operation," Deputy Minister of Health Huang Jiefu said.

"If we start allowing organ transplants for tourists, the existing order will be disturbed," he said.

Huang said the country will investigate whether 17 Japanese tourists have indeed received illegal organ transplants after the country banned the trade in human organs in May 2007.

China will punish the doctors and medical institutions involved, Huang said, adding that the country plans to develop a national registration system regulating organ transplants at all medical facilities.

The ministry's investigation comes after a report by the Kyodo News agency in Japan that said the 17 tourists spent around 594,000 yuan each for the operation. The price reportedly included travel, accommodations and 20 days of recovery at a hospital in southern Guangzhou Province.

At the request of the hospital, some of the Japanese patients registered under Chinese names, the Kyodo report said. Most of the patients were between 50 and 65 years old.

A press officer at the Japanese Embassy said they did not have any information about the transplants. **(Agencies)**

Official stance: strong opposition to transplant tours

"China strongly opposes organ transplant tourism," the Ministry of Health said in a statement on its Web site, adding that the hospitals and medical personnel "who carried out the organ transplants against the rules will be severely dealt with according to the law."

The country has banned all transplants for foreigners – so-called "organ tourists" – because an estimated 1.5 million Chinese nationals are on the waiting lists for transplants, the ministry said.

Currently, there are 160 medical institutions in China licensed to perform transplants, and then only with approval from provincial health departments, Xinhua news agency said.

The ministry said the country has been making efforts to better regulate organ transplants. In late 2007, medical officials agreed not to transplant organs from prisoners or others in custody, except to members of their immediate families.

Earlier in 2007, the State Council issued regulations making it illegal to harvest human organs without government permission. The rules also included a ban on the sale of human organs for profit and on donations by people under 18. **(Agencies)**



Statistics show that transplant tours to China are on the rise.

CFP Photo

Expert: Transplant tourism in developing countries on rise

By Huang Daohen

Because the supply of human organs cannot meet the demand for them, "transplant tours" to developing countries are on the rise, according to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO).

WHO is concerned about the trend, in which people in developing nations have been persuaded to sell body parts to strangers, mostly through a broker, Natalie Boudou-Jacobs, an official with the UN agency's health information and research unit, said.

The practice has increased over the past decade, Boudou-Jacobs said in an email statement. "We believe 5 to 10 percent of all kidneys transplanted were transplanted in this setting," she said.

Once considered an urban myth, Boudou-Jacobs said the black market in organ trade has grown into a global concern. Organ trafficking is generally conducted by a criminal network connecting organ buyers, sellers and "broker friendly" hospitals.

WHO estimates 14,000 of the 70,000 kidneys transplanted worldwide each year are from the black market.

Boudou-Jacobs said patients from Western countries who are desperately in

need of transplants make up as much as 40 percent of the underground market. Brokers regularly arrange transplants within weeks rather than the months or years it takes in the West.

In some developing countries, Pakistan for example, 40 to 50 percent of the residents of some villages have only one kidney because they have sold the other to a wealthy individual, likely from another country, Boudou-Jacobs said.

In Western countries, kidney transplant packages are advertised on the Internet, ranging from US \$12,000 (82,000 yuan) to US \$20,000. This includes the organ and seven days of hospitalization in the country of surgery, Boudou-Jacobs said. "It would be far more expensive to have it done in North America."

There are roughly 100,000 people waiting for organ transplants in the US alone, with a waiting time of up to three years.

As for China, Boudou-Jacobs said there is a flourishing underground trade in organ sales and transplants, especially for Japanese and South Korean patients. But the situation will improve with government enforcement of regulations, he said.

How to apply for a legitimate organ transplant

Foreigners who want to carry out an organ transplant in China should apply to one of the 160 medical institutions that are licensed to perform them. The institutions will then forward applications to the provincial health administration, which will in turn pass them on to the Ministry of Health for approval.

Without approval from the ministry, no organ transplant can be performed,

according to the regulations on human organ transplants which came into effect May 1, 2007.

The regulations ban all domestic medical institutions from carrying out organ transplants on foreigners or "medical tourists," and further forbids medical staff from circumventing the law by performing the surgery in another country.

(By Huang Daohen)

Wall falls to make room for Mickey

(The New York Times) – For decades, locals in this frigid outpost south of Siberia shaved and chipped and hacked away at big blocks of ice to create China's most popular wintertime tourist attraction.

Rising among the barren trees, the sculptures of the Harbin Ice Lantern Festival took the shapes of iconic Chinese monuments: the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, sacred Buddhist mountains.

They took those shapes, that is, until this winter, when in sauntered Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Winnie the Pooh.

What is perhaps the world's most famous ice festival has become another of the world's Disney theme parks, with a Disney licensing company taking over operations from the local government. It is the first time a private company has run the ice festival.

Snow White has replaced snow dragons. Children wander through the frozen hallways of Aladdin's Castle instead of a Qing dynasty palace. "It's a Small World" plays in one corner of the park.

"It was too stodgy," Qi Juwei, 51, the organizer of this year's event, said of the old festival. "You can't keep putting the same light in the same block of ice."

Qi is a native of Harbin who immigrated to Japan in the 1990s. At age 12, he stood here in Zhaolin Park and marveled at an ice replica of the Yellow Crane Tower, an ancient pagoda. A few years ago, as vice president of Rendez-Vous, a Shanghai-based company that licenses Disney products in Asia, he gazed across the park and imagined workers stacking blocks of ice to build Cinderella's castle, Mickey's house and a Pirates of the Caribbean frigate.

Unlike at Hong Kong Disneyland, Walt Disney does not actually operate the ice festival, although it did look over the sculpture designs "to make sure they are in line with the Disney brand guidelines," Tiffany Huang, a company spokeswoman, said in an email message.

Local officials gave permission for the licensing company, along with a separate company that Qi helped found, to take over the festival for a fee.

The Disney sculptures were created over a two-week period. Workers began hauling chunks of ice out of the Songhua River on December 6. At the start, when the ice is thinner, the blocks weigh more than 385 kilograms. As the ice thickens during the winter, the blocks can weigh up to twice that.

A ticket costs 102 yuan, almost double what it was last year. That is expensive by Chinese standards, but the festival is still a big draw, with an average of 3,000 attendees per day. On a recent night, when temperatures dipped below -4F (-20C), thousands of people streamed in.

"This is beautiful," said Li Jing, 22, a university student wearing fake cat ears who posed for a photo beneath a picture of Tigger on an ice wall. "It brings back my childhood memories. I watched a lot of cartoons when I was young, like Winnie the Pooh."

Sweatshop making IBM, Dell and HP products under probe

By Huang Daohen

A third-party group will investigate working conditions at a Guangdong-based hardware factory that supplies tech giants including IBM, Microsoft, Dell, Lenovo and Hewlett-Packard, the Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC), a US-based self-regulating body set up by the tech companies, said.

EICC's move follows the report "High Tech Misery in China" released by the National Labor Committee (NLC), a human-rights group based in Pittsburgh, US.

According to the report, released earlier this month, workers face prison-like conditions and earn about 3 yuan per hour at Meitai Plastic and Electronics in Dongguan, Guangdong Province. The factory makes keyboards and other equipment for Dell, HP, IBM, Microsoft and Lenovo.

The NLC said it visited the factory between last June and this January. It found the workers, mostly young women ages 18 to mid-20s, are not allowed to talk, listen to music, look around them, put their hands in their pockets or go to the toilet unless it is on an official break.

On the assembly line, a key-board passes each worker every 7.2 seconds. The worker must snap six to seven keys into place during that time, the report, said.

EICC said a joint-audit is being conducted to collect facts.

However, report co-author Charles Kernaghan questioned whether the EICC probe would be effective. "It's excellent (that there will be an investigation). But the fact that they've announced the date, February 23 and 24, guarantees the investigation will be compromised," Kernaghan said.

Companies' response

The companies named in the list said they would investigate conditions but none said they would cancel contracts with the factory.

Lenovo China said it is involved in the investigation as a member of EICC, but that it does not deal directly with the factory, which has links with one of its suppliers.

"Lenovo makes every effort possible to investigate and ensure that our suppliers adhere to and comply with accepted international manufacturing standards and labor practices and takes these matters very seriously," it said in an emailed statement.

Lenovo said it will call on

its supplier to help investigate the probe.

Microsoft said the Meitai factory supplies one of its contracted manufacturers. "We are working closely with our industry partners and contracted supplier to investigate and make any necessary improvements to comply with guidelines and regulations," a spokesperson said.

Dell said it was "actively investigating" the issues in the report. "I can tell you that any reports of poor working conditions in Dell's supply chain are investigated and appropriate action is taken," it said.

As of press time, IBM and HP China had not responded to a request for comment.

Ericsson wins 30 pct of China Unicom order

Telecom equipment maker Ericsson won 30 percent of a deal to build China Unicom's third-generation mobile network, a spokesman for the Swedish firm said Tuesday.

Ericsson spokesman Tobias Gyhlenius said the company had no comment on the deal, which followed the long-delayed release of 3G licenses by the Chinese government in January.

China Unicom and China Telecom will spend 30 billion yuan each this year to build 3G networks, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said last month.

China Mobile, the world's largest mobile carrier and Ericsson's biggest customer, will spend 58.8 billion yuan in 2009 to build its 3G network.

David Hallden, an analyst at Cheuvreux, said Ericsson's win from China Unicom was expected, and it had not affected the company's share price.

A second analyst said Ericsson won slightly more of the order than expected.

"It is a little better than what had been indicated by rumors in China a couple of weeks ago when a figure of 25.6 percent was mentioned," the second analyst said.

Nike plans to build logistics centre

Nike will build a logistics center in eastern China, the company's largest in central Asia when it is completed at the end of 2010, the company said in a statement seen Wednesday.

Construction on the center will begin during the first quarter of the year and will direct the flow of Nike shoes and apparel in China, Nike's second-largest market after the US and one of its fastest growing.

Nike, the world's largest athletic shoe and clothing maker, did not put a value on the center, but China Business News said the investment would be 676 million yuan.

Investment in the center could be expanded to include other brands in the Nike stable, it said, without elaborating.

British Airways optimistic on China market

By Li Jing

British Airways, in association with VisitBritain, is offering promotional return flights to London starting from 2,950 yuan. As part of the promotion, connecting flights from London to six other UK destinations are priced 430 yuan.

The reduced fare is available until March 11 at ba.com and good for tickets booked through June 30.

"Despite the financial crisis, British Airways is optimistic about the market in China," said Xia Tian, the sales manager of British Airway Greater China.

In association with the depreciation of the British pound against the yuan and the UK-China Approved Destination Status, more Chinese travelers are choosing the UK as a destination.

McDonald's opens web shop

By Zheng Lu

After changing the price of its value meals earlier this month from more than 20 yuan to 16.50 yuan – the price 10 years ago – McDonald's sets its sights on a new playing field for young buyers: the Internet. The food giant has opened a store on Taobao.com last week, though its products will hardly aid gamers having a "Mac attack."

No McDonald's products are sold at the online store aside from coupons priced 65 and 38.50 yuan, which offer a savings of 5 to 10 yuan. Its key products are unrelated to foodstuffs, and instead deal with home supplies and small appliances like coffee makers, cell phones and digital cameras valued 3,000 yuan.

The shop auctions its products backwards. The initial offering is set at the suggested retail price for a project, and each bid lowers it until it reaches 16.50 yuan, the cost of a McDonald's Extra Value Meal.

The winner is required to go to a McDonald's and purchase an Extra Value Meal matching the "winning bid." After sending confirmation of their purchase to McDonald's headquarters, the buyer can receive his or her item.



The Web shop comes after Zhou Weicheng, vice president of McDonald's China, announced the price cut last month. CFP Photo

As of yesterday, some 350,000 people have visited the store. A hundred goods are offered for auction each day, and each auction begins and ends within a few minutes.

The company said the auctions will continue through after

which the food giant will begin a new online promotion.

Zhang Jiayin, vice president of McDonald's China, said the company opened its Taobao.com shop because it was "the most influential marketing network and shop-

ping platform in (China)."

In a Reuters report filed Wednesday, Brian Durkin, McDonald's vice president of development in China, said the company plans to open about 500 more China stores within three years.

Sichuan Auto denies interest in Hummer

By Huang Daohen

Sichuan Auto Industry Group said Tuesday it has no interest in buying General Motors' (GM) Hummer unit, denying recent media reports.

The company, one of the smallest automakers in the country, was reported to be in talks with GM to buy its Hummer sport-utility vehicle unit and could pay up to US \$500 million for the deal.

"It's a complete rumor," a senior official with the company said, "We have never had discussions with GM, nor are we inter-

ested in Hummer."

"I'm also wondering where you (the media) got the news," the official, who only gave his name as Li, said. However, he declined to comment on the possibility of another Chinese carmaker placing a bid on Hummer.

Closely held Sichuan Auto is not among the 79 major automakers in China ranked by assets, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

The company has about 1 billion yuan in assets and the capacity to make 5,000 buses, 30,000

passenger vehicles and 50,000 engines a year, according to its Web site. The company also sells Yema brand sport-utility vehicles, based on MG Rover Group's technology and equipped with Mitsubishi Motors' engines.

Though Sichuan Auto's bid was a rumor, experts say Chinese automakers' eagerness to buy overseas brands is no exaggeration.

GM, whose Hummer sales plunged 60 percent in January, must raise cash and cut its debt to receive a US \$13.4 billion aid package from the US government. CEO Rick Wag-

oner said GM was considering options for Hummer, including a sale, at a shareholders meeting as automakers shift their focus to more fuel-efficient cars and away from light trucks.

The Hummer deal, if successful, would help GM keep its loans from the US government, Zhao Xiao, economics professor with the University of Science and Technology Beijing, said.

On the Chinese side, Zhao said automakers may use the economic crisis to buy car brands and technology to help them expand overseas.

Husband kills wife in coma

By Zhang Dongya

A man from Shenzhen sur-named Wen pulled out the oxygen and infusion tubes connected to the body of his wife who had been in a coma for a week, saying he wanted to help end her suffering, the *Southern Metropolis Daily* reported Wednesday. The woman died Monday.

Their parents are waiting for the autopsy report, and Wen has since been arrested by local police. Meanwhile, netizens have harshly criticized Wen's behavior.

The wife, Hu Jing, 34, was Wen's classmate at the Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, where both majored in law. Wen has a wealthy background, while Hu belongs to a middle-class family from Hubei Province. They got married 10 years ago and lived in a villa in Shenzhen.

On the evening of February 9, Hu fainted at their home's fourth floor. Hu's mother, who visited for Spring Festival and was on the second floor, said she heard Wen cry out, "Mom, come!" When she reached them, she found her

daughter lying unconscious on the floor, with Wen performing artificial respiration.

The mother does not know why Hu fainted; Wen said she fell down the stairs. Hu was rushed to a hospital where her breathing and heartbeat stabilized, but she had already slipped into a coma. That same evening, she was transferred to the Shenzhen Second Hospital, where tests revealed she was critically ill.

In the afternoon of Hu's seventh day in the hospital, her mother who came for a visit and was waiting for her turn outside the room, said she heard a noise coming from inside. She rushed in and saw Wen unplugging tubes from her daughter's body. A nurse tried to stop him, but he continued, crying out, "I don't want to see her suffer any longer!" Hu died 10 minutes later.

Hu's mother believed Wen's actions had criminal intent, and reported him to the police. The police came to arrest Wen, and an investigation is underway.

Comment

Euthanasia unlawful

Euthanasia is not allowed under the law, so whether or not the husband did it out of mercy, his behavior still violated the law. Supporters of euthanasia hold that people have the right to end their lives with dignity, and it should be adopted to end tremendous suffering.

But the most important thing is that the person involved, or her representatives, is willing to do it. In this case, even if we call it "mercy-killing," the husband did it without the permission of his wife or her family, so it is illegal.

— Wang Wanxiong, lawyer at Today Law Firm in Hubei Province

No reason to end a life

There is not enough reason for one to deprive another of life, even a husband or wife. "Love" was probably the husband's excuse to kill his wife. Though the police report hasn't come out yet, no matter what his motive was, it was still murder.

— Dongzheng Wonu, netizen on ifeng.com

A marital tragedy

It is a tradition for marrying couples to come from families of equal standing; family background is vital to a marriage. The man's mother opposed the marriage from the beginning, which probably had a huge influence on the couple's life. The wide economic gap between the two will lead to imbalance and instability in the relationship.

— Li Jing, clerk at Hunan Jincheng Logistics Company

Building Counter-Strike field at quake-hit site questioned

By Zheng Lu

Nine months have passed since the magnitude-8 earthquake that hit Sichuan Province. People are beginning to accept the loss of loved ones; infrastructure is being rebuilt; and residents are thinking of ways to revitalize the economy. One of the new business plans to emerge is a Counter-Strike (CS) battlefield on 40 hectares of land in Pengzhou, Sichuan Province.

Dai Jun, the general manager of Baoshan Group, which developed the site, said that before the quake struck, the company planned to build the biggest outdoor sporting arena in southwestern China.

Baoshan developed the plan together with Sichuan Province's mountain club, and they chose a scenic spot in the mountains of Pengzhou, about 80 kilometers from the provincial capital of Chengdu. Dai and his team said the site was an ideal CS battlefield because of its flowing river, underbrush and natural obstacles.

As news of the CS field spread,

the first reactions were incredulity at the insensitivity of the plan. A survey on Sina.com shows that about one-third of respondents opposed the project, saying it shows no respect for those who died in the quake.

In response, Dai said it is not accurate to call the CS field "quake ruins." Although it is near the epicenter of Yingxiu County, it was always an open area with no buildings or people.

But people who oppose the plan went on to say that reconstruction was still underway, and that it was the wrong time and place for a leisure center.

There are people, however, who support the project. Most of them say they understand the opposition to it, but believe "there is no use sadly contemplating the past. Only moving forward can heal the pain."

A villager who lives near the CS field told a local reporter the other day he is not familiar with CS, but "as long as it helps to attract visitors, we will welcome it."

Comment

Timely plan to attract investment

What's wrong with attracting investment? The plan involves low costs, but high returns. And since CS is currently popular, the opportunity should not be allowed to slip by.

— Du Wei, bank clerk

What is real respect?

If building the CS field is disrespectful to the dead, then why don't we just turn all quake-stricken areas into graveyards?

— Chen Hehui, student

The living is the most important

I believe that if the deceased could talk, they would expect their loved ones to lead a better life.

— Amanda Zhou, sales manager

Don't dance over other's grave

Even the reconstruction of the city of Tangshan avoided the town where 200,000 people are buried. Why can't the company take that as a model to follow? It is not proper to carry out such a plan close to where many lives tragically ended.

— Jason Blake, student



The ruins in Pengzhou are said to be a perfect place for CS battle games.
CFP Photo

Should Olympic paraphernalia be removed?

By Zhao Hongyi

Half a year after the close of the Beijing Olympics, a debate continues over whether or not the city should remove from public areas and competition venues Olympic paraphernalia, including logos, sculptures, road signs, countdown timers and slogans like "One World, One Dream" and "Beijing Welcomes You."

The argument started among netizens last December, leading officials of the Beijing Organizing Committee of the 29th Olympic Games (BOCOG) to clarify that the decision to take down these things depends on the district governments that maintain the roads and venues.

Signs along what once were Olympic express-lanes in the city's inner streets became the first target. Netizens urged BOCOG to remove the signs because they distracted and confused drivers.

The attention then moved to the six large countdown timers. The China History Museum took one of them and placed it on the museum's front square soon after the Games ended. The other five are still in their original locations, in landmark spots around the city.

The management of most competition venues said they preferred to keep the Olympic decors in place, while most communities said they would like to preserve the sculptures erected in their localities.

BOCOG has already removed Olympic paraphernalia from main venues including the Bird's Nest, Water Cube, Media and Press Center and the International Broadcasting Center. It turned flags and banners into bags and other souvenirs, which were sold to the public.

Comment

A joint effort of private and public entities

We'll take away the commercial logos and brands on these signs, and they will be moved. As for the timers, we need to coordinate with the sponsors to take back the machines. But it is the responsibility and decision of communities and the municipality when and how to deal with the other signs.

— BOCOG

Permanent fixtures in sporting venues

These things have become part of the sporting venues and are eye-catching to tourists, visitors and users of the venues. We'll keep them forever.

— spokesman for State Assets Management Corporation

Part of the city's history

I think these signs are part of the city's history. We should keep them, either on the streets or in our museums. Each time I see them, I feel younger and more energized.

— Ma Zhen, local resident

No rush to take down signs

We should keep the Olympic markings, except the commercial logos. They have become part of the culture both of the Olympics and Beijing.

— Mark Roberts, freelancer

British teen gives foreign kids Chinese lessons online



Daisy Raffan (middle) with some chinese club kids.

Photo provided by Daisy Raffan

Former IOC official given Chinese friendship award



Verbruggen carries the Olympic torch during the Beijing Olympic torch relay.

CFP Photo

By Han Manman

Hein Verbruggen, who led the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) oversight panel for the Beijing Olympics, was given China's 2008 Friendship Award Tuesday for his contributions to the Games.

Ji Yunshi, director of the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, said Verbruggen, as former president of both the evaluation and coordination commission for the Games, maintained a comprehensive and objective outlook in evaluating Beijing's ability to host the Olympics.

In the lead-up to the Games, he also paved the way for China to work with other countries, and publicized China's efforts to the international community, Ji said.

Verbruggen, 67, said at the award ceremony that the thing he considered most important about the recognition was its name: "friendship."

The Dutchman said that work toward the Beijing Olympics enabled him to make many Chinese friends.

The Beijing Games witnessed "perfect organization," Verbruggen said, adding that the event was a "tremendous legacy" to China.

Verbruggen said he has seen

improvements in many aspects of the city, including traffic and the environment, since it won the right to host the 2008 Olympics. The Games brought spectators worldwide to China, and provided opportunities for foreigners to better understand the country, he said.

Born in Helmond, Holland in 1941, Verbruggen served as president of the international cycling union from 1991 to 2005. In 2001, he became chairman of the IOC coordination commission for Beijing and led the panel that paid regular visits to the Chinese capital to monitor logistical preparations for the Games.

After the Olympics, however, he relinquished his membership of the IOC to seek a "quieter life," although he remains an honorary member.

Verbruggen was one of the 12 Friendship Award recipients for 2008, the highest award China gives foreign nationals who have made outstanding contributions to the nation's economic and social progress.

Other awardees included Roger Eriksson, president of Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications (China) and Ulrich Walker, chairman and CEO of Daimler Northeast Asia.

By Zheng Lu

In foreign countries, children who want to learn Chinese usually enroll in Chinese schools or hire private tutors. Now they have another option: to learn the language online, from young, life long UK resident.

Last month, during Spring Festival, an online Chinese club was launched in Britain by an 18-year-old named Daisy Raffan. After studying Chinese for years, she thought it was important to help other young people learn the language to "prepare for the future." Her plan has received the support of the British prime minister.

Chinese lessons at age five

Raffan, who comes from Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire in southern England, was sent to a Chinese school every Sunday since she was five. Her parents thought the language would give her an edge in the future, and she became the only non-ethnic Chinese student in the school.

To her parents' surprise, Raffan became her class's top student in speaking, reading and writing. She developed a strong interest in learning the language and preferred to forgo friends' parties than miss a class.

Eight years later, she chose to go to a boarding school at the Cheltenham Ladies College in England, where there were as many as 200 Chinese students. She not only forged new friendships, but at 14, passed the General Certificate of Secondary Education's (GCSE) Chinese exam with the highest mark of A*.

Putting ideas into action

The idea to set up a Chinese teaching Web site came to Raffan a year after taking her GCSEs, when one of her Chinese friends suggested she teach the language to British children. With the plan formed,

she began looking for teachers. It was also during this time that she made her first trip to China to do a two-week internship at Tesco supermarkets in Shanghai upon the UK company's invitation. She also visited Beijing, and the trip strengthened her resolve to set up a great Web site.

The site, kidschineseclub.com, was finally launched on January 26, Chinese Lunar New Year and Raffan's 18th birthday. She thought the timing was right, coming half a year after the Beijing Olympics and many saw for the first time your wonderful history and modern China," she said.

Raffan and her team designed 24 lessons to be taught over a period of two years. Each lesson costs US \$15 (100 yuan), which allows students to watch videos in which Raffan teaches Chinese. By the end of the program, students know enough Chinese to enable them to conduct a basic conversation, as well as to write on the same level.

Apart from English, Kids Chinese Club also offers instructions in French and Spanish, foreign languages that Raffan studied in middle school.

Up and coming plans

Since its launch, thousands of children have already registered on the site and have shared their learning experiences through online posts. At least 400 schools in the UK have expressed interest in working with Raffan.

Raffan regards as her most satisfying moments receiving emails of support from Chinese people, including children. Some have asked her if she could teach them English. In response, Raffan and her team this week set up a section where Chinese people can learn English.

Before setting up her site, Raffan sent British prime minister Gordon Brown a letter, informing him of her plan. She was cheered on by Brown's reply, in which he said that learning Chinese is important for Britain's future generations.

A recent email from China suggested that Raffan also write to Premier Wen Jiabao. Raffan, who is currently studying business management at a university in Dubai, said she plans to write to Wen and US President Barack Obama to ask for their support in communicating the importance of learning Chinese.

World Bank approves \$710 M post-quake reconstruction loan

By Jin Zhu

The World Bank announced last Friday the approval of a US \$710 million (4.8 billion yuan) loan for China's earthquake reconstruction projects.

The bank's China Office said the funds will primarily be used to support the rebuilding of infrastructure, health and education facilities in Sichuan and Gansu, the two provinces worst hit by the magnitude-8 quake last May.

"The World Bank funds include a loan of US \$510 million to Sichuan and US \$200 million to Gansu to help rebuild infrastructure, such as roads, bridges,

water supplies, sewerage systems and health facilities, and to support the redevelopment of education facilities in Gansu Province," Mara Warwick, a senior urban environment specialist with the bank, said.

"The project will assist many communities to rebuild their lives by restoring essential services," she said. "Although it represents only a small part of the government's overall recovery effort, the World Bank's extensive global experience in post-disaster reconstruction, management and prevention will be shared through the project."

According to the Sichuan Urban Construction and Environmental Protection Project Office, US \$450 million of the loan will be used to support urban construction projects and US \$60 million to rebuild medical establishments in towns and villages.

"For the participating provinces, there is no need to pay the loan's interest and provide counterpart funding, since the central government will make arrangements for borrowing and repaying," Shi Yi, deputy director of the project office, said.

The World Bank has several ongoing projects in Sichuan,

including major ones in infrastructure, rural water supply improvement and primary education.

"The bank has rich experience in helping countries hit by major natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis. After the Wenchuan earthquake, we sent experts to China to help the government assess the damage and draft rebuilding plans," Warwick said.

Because the reconstruction process may take as long as eight years, the bank is prepared to update its assistance projects to meet new needs, she added.

Nepal seeks to promote tourism in China

By Han Manman

With Nepal facing a financial downturn, it has emphasized bilateral cooperation with China in the tourism sector, which plays a vital role in the Himalayan nation's economy, Rajesh Kazi Shrestha, president of the Nepal-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI), said Tuesday.

Shrestha said there is an urgent need for Nepal to seek cooperation with neighbors, and in these bad times for the world economy, Asian countries, especially China, are showing flexibility.

"China will weather this phase of the financial turmoil and come up as a much bigger player in the world economy. We are a very close neighbor to China, and hope that Nepal will also benefit from the strength of the Chinese economy," Shrestha said.

"The number of Chinese citizens going abroad is over 40 million and is continuously growing. The largest market in Asia has attracted us," he said.

The number of Chinese visitors to Nepal has been increasing in the last few years, but it is small compared to those going overseas, Shrestha said.

"Nepal's tourism will get a big boost if even a small fraction of the total number of Chinese tourists heads to Nepal," he said, adding that the country urgently needs to develop convenient air and land transportation links with its neighbor.

"The bus service between Nepal and Lhasa must be recontinued to bring immediate benefits," Shrestha said.

In an attempt to promote Nepal as a tourist destination, its government has waived visa fees for 2011. Flights to and from Mumbai, Shanghai and Tokyo will commence next month, Nepal's minister for tourism and civil aviation, Hisila Yami, said in an earlier press conference. Flights from Riyadh, Lhasa, Frankfurt and London will be available by the end of 2010.

Nepal has marked 2011 as "Nepal Tourism Year," in part to attract more international tourists to the country.

Diplomats visit young leukemia patients



Cathleen Pecsteen (L), wife of Consul General Marc Pecsteen of the Belgian Consulate General in Shanghai, and Judit Hajba (R), culture attache of the Hungarian Consulate in Shanghai, share a cake with young leukemia patients at Shanghai's Tongji Hospital on Tuesday. Foreign diplomats in the city visited the children and distributed gifts for a hospital activity called Lightening the Endeared Aspiration with Charitable Hearts.

(By Han Manman) IC Photo

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Full house at Yu Hua's talk

By Zhang Dongya

Chinese author Yu Hua introduced his latest novel, *Brothers*, at the Bookworm Tuesday evening. This month, Pan Macmillan Asia released the book's English version and Asian edition, which was translated by Eileen Cheng-yin Chow and Carlos Rojas.

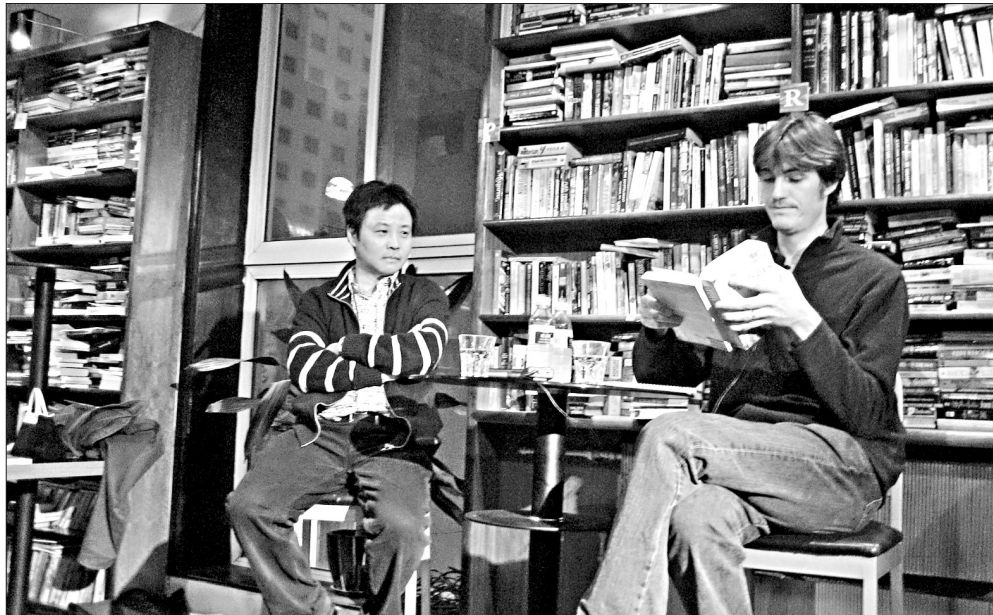
Brothers, first published in 2005, is Yu Hua's fifth novel, which tells the story of two stepbrothers, Song Gang and Baldy Li. Set in the brutal and violent period of the Cultural Revolution and the ensuing years, Yu paints an extraordinary portrait of modern China through the eyes of the two men. The book made the short list for the Man Asian Literary Prize last year.

Yu, 49, born in Zhejiang Province, has become one of the country's most talked-about authors. He is best known for the novel *To Live*, but said that "so far, *Brothers* is the most important novel to me."

Brothers, which is reprinted locally every two months, has also won a huge following overseas. But along with raving reviews, *Brothers* received fierce criticism, much like Yu's other books.

Nearly 100 people attended Yu's talk, most of whom were foreigners, including journalists, translators and students. Jenny Niven of the Bookworm said tickets to the event were sold out two weeks in advance, and Yu's books that were on display at the bookstore-cum-cafe were sold out that evening.

The novel is divided into two volumes: the Cultural Revolution



Yu Hua (left) during his talk at the Bookworm

Photo by Ye Yusang

and the present day. Yu said it was the contrast between the two periods that excited him, especially when he found a good angle to juxtapose the past and the present. "The contrast between the two eras is actually stronger than what I portrayed in my book. I tried to portray more unity in the book, but the reality is more scattered," he said.

Three years after *Brothers* came out, Yu has finally realized why some people reacted vehemently to the novel. He agreed with Chen Sihe, a professor at Fudan University, that the taste of Chinese read-

ers is a big problem – they have a low threshold for comedy, black humor or irony.

The most controversial aspect of the story, which also drew the most questions, was the author's point of view in writing the book. Yu said he told the story from the perspective of a "patient" instead of a "doctor" – unlike most Chinese, even foreign, authors.

The book narrator's use of the phrase "We, Liu Town people," instead of the familiar first or third person, was another unique feature of Yu's work – a facet that was discovered only by American critics.

Some people interpret this as a shift between the elegant and the vulgar, much as the different people in Liu Town changed.

When asked about changes in readers after reading his book, Yu said, "I believe fiction has no power to change people, has no power to change society, but it does have the power to change some people's attitude toward society."

Jeff Zhu, sales executive at Pan Macmillan Asia, said they were excited to win the copyright of the book's Asia edition, and that they were holding another book talk with Yu in Shanghai this weekend.

The Bookworm International Literary Festival 2009

The Bookworm International Literary Festival 2009 is a two-week celebration of the written word.

Featuring topics including fiction, politics, poetry, memoir, translation, travel writing, China, business and journalism, the program brings writers from across the globe, giving attendees the chance to engage with

first-class literary talent.

This festival brings commentators on China and East Asia with sessions from Ian Buruma and Jonathan Fenby. Best-selling fiction is presented by Marina Lewycka and Rabih Alameddine. From the world of TV and film, Tilda Swinton and William Zorzi will be stopping by. Translators Howard Gold-

blatt and Eliot Weinberger – two of the best practitioners in their field – will be revealing the secrets of their craft.

The Bookworm will in March also have extensive series of hands-on workshops so one can really get involved.

From "Writing Memoir" with best-seller Blake Morrison (*When Did You Last See Your Father?*),

to "Successful Screenwriting" with William Zorzi (*The Wire*), this year puts book lovers at the centre of the program.

Other treats include expert-guided walking tours of previously closed sections of the Forbidden City, a riot of children's programming, and even the chance for one to physically bind his or own handmade books.

Irish Network ready for St Patrick's

By Gan Tian

The annual Irish Ball is the highlight of the Irish community's social calendar in town. Organized by the Irish Network China, the event on March 14 at the Kerry Centre Hotel is aimed at painting the town green.

The black-tie occasion, this year themed "A Touch of Green," marks St Patrick's Day, the national day of Ireland. It is a night to celebrate Irish culture and food. The ball also aims to raise funds for Jinde Charities, a Hebei-based NGO that supports impoverished school children and raises awareness of AIDS in China.

Ball attendees will be entertained by Ultrasound, a band flying in from Dublin to serve up a feast of Irish rock and pop. During the evening, there will also be Irish dancing and a free flow of stout and whiskey.

"The Irish Ball was one of the

first expatriate balls in Beijing and it gets better every year – It's amazing how many people in Beijing know about St Patrick's Day," said Catherine Toolan, chairperson of the Irish Network China, a Beijing-based volunteer organization bringing together Irish people and locals.

Keen to be part of the local community, the group has set up an English teaching volunteer program: Members and their friends teach Chinese seniors and unemployed people from Chaoyang District a few hours every Saturday.

"Our most senior student is 85 years old and our youngest is 10, but all of them share the same enthusiasm to learn English," Mark Godfrey, community relations officer of the Irish Network China, said.

Tickets to the ball are priced 998 yuan. Anyone interested can go to irishnetworkchina.com for more details.



Irish children in their St Patrick's Day costumes.

Photo provided by irishnetworkchina.com

Event

Contemporary Jazz Dancing

Find ballet too rigid, but love the discipline of dance? Come learn Jazz styles, including Broadway, lyrical and modern, from the founder and artistic director of DanZ Centre, Kim Teinchai. The class requires some dance experience or the ability to pick up movements quickly. Attendees should at least be teenagers.

When: February 21, 3:30-5:30 pm

Where: Danz Center, 2/F, Children's Club House, Yosemite Villas, Shunyi District

Tel: 8041 7745

Weekly Badminton Game

A mall club holds badminton games every Sunday, and are recruiting new players

Where: Dongdan PE Center, 108 Chongwenmen Nei Nan Dajie, Chongwen District

When: February 22, 12 nn – 2 pm

Cost: 40 yuan

Email:

bakershow@163.com

Hello Kitty Musical

Next week, the musical *Hello Kitty* will be staged in town. It will be a Japanese-Chinese co-production, with original Hello Kitty costumes from Japan. Featuring Chinese acrobatics, it is a funny and endearing musical for kids, especially Hello Kitty fans.

When: February 20, 10 am – 7:30 pm

Where: Haidian Theater, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian District

Tel: 6254 6839

Color Therapy Workshop

Tired of grey skies and drab Beijing winters? Come learn how color can lift your spirits. Match the color of your home and environment with the color of your authentic self. The workshop will show how paint colors can be personalized, and how different palettes can be used to enhance your home – and your mood.

When: February 20, 1-3 pm

Where: The Yin Yang Community Center, Hegezhuang Village, Cuigezhuang township, Shunyi District

Cost: 100 yuan

Tel: 6431 2108

Nanshan Ski

Nanshan is the best bet for skiing and snowboarding in Beijing. The snowboard park is one of the best in the country with two kickers, a mini pipe and over 12 boxes and rails. The snowboard school is run by Burton Learn to Ride and their rentals are all Nitro gear.

When: February 20, 8:30 am – 5 pm

Where: Nanshan Ski Village, Shengshuitou Village, Henanzhai Town, Miyun District

Tel: 8909 1909

Cost: 210 yuan, including ski rental and entrance ticket

(By Wei Ying)

Cooking schools

By Annie Wei

Out of nowhere, cooking schools have sprouted up in town, offering lessons in Chinese regional cuisines and international flavors, and enticing people from all walks of life to sign up.



Sandra Huang (left) teaches Toshiko Karsten (second from right) and Yukari Katayama (right) how to prepare Chinese dishes.

Photo by Annie Wei

The Hutong

Although winter is not a popular season for *hutong* visits, Japanese women Toshiko Karsten and Yukari Katayama showed up at The Hutong on Tuesday morning for a two-hour Chinese cooking class. The teacher, Sandra Huang, a former high school teacher and education consultant from the US, runs a food blog called Savour Asia (savourasia.com).

It introduces ingredients, cooking techniques and special Chinese regional cuisines, gives restaurant recommendations and provides recipes and travel resources, including local cooking school recommendations.

Sandra has been living in Beijing for two and a half years and has been giving cooking lessons since last fall. Although her family roots are in Taiwan and Sichuan Province, her cooking repertoire is much more extensive. She attended a local cooking school specializing in Hunan cuisine; she became familiar with Vietnamese food while living in Hanoi for three years; she took cooking lessons in Thai-

land; and she still tries to fit in short-term cooking classes wherever she might be traveling.

On that Tuesday morning, Sandra taught Karsten and Katayama how to prepare three dishes: Three Cup Chicken, Eggplant and Taiwanese Basil, and Quick-fried Sweet Peas and Prawns.

Sandra shared many useful tips, for example, while cutting an eggplant, she suggested making a diamond cut and rolling the eggplant after cutting each piece.

While waiting for the Three Cup Chicken to braise, she introduced different types of vinegars one can use in Chinese cuisines as well as compared the flavors of three varieties of chilis.

The students, Karsten and Katayama, moved to Beijing six months ago. They cook for their families every day, and are intrigued by Chinese cuisine.

"I never thought these two (sweet peas and prawns) could go so well together," Karsten said. In Japan, they normally boil sweet peas with a bit of salt to prepare a healthy snack, she said.

The Hutong, a cultural exchange community center founded by Australians Stacey Shine and Mark Thirlwall, has other teachers aside from Huang.

They include Shalu Asnani, from India, who gives lessons on Indian cooking and modern vegetarian cuisine using local ingredients; Gulistan, from Xinjiang, runs a class on how to make hand-pulled noodles; Jeff Powell, of Element Fresh restaurant, teaches modern Chinese cuisine, Feng Shui Cooking and Cooking with Tea; Sophia Du, from China, runs the gourmet dumpling-making workshop.

The center also has a class called Market Trip, which teaches students how to choose good vegetables and other ingredients from local markets. On most weekends, The Hutong runs baking and cooking workshops for kids.

Where: 1 Jiudaowanzhongxiang Hutong, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8915 3613

Web site: the-hutong.com

Cost: 200 yuan for members for a cooking class

Vocational cooking schools

Among the Beijing cooking schools that Sandra Huang has attended is a *zhiye xuexiao* or vocational school, many of which are heavily advertised on TV. There she took two courses: a week of how to make Xinjiang hand-pulled noodles and two months of intensive lessons in Sichuan and Hunan cuisine.

The latter course taught her how to make 60 dishes in one month. But to Huang, these schools, which provide only the most basic amenities, are geared more for young Chinese people from outside Beijing who want to build a career as cooks. They take classes either to increase their chances of landing a job at a good restaurant, or to expand their repertoire of dishes if they are already working as cooks.

"Some aim to open their own food stall right after graduation," Huang said. She, however, was after learning new cooking styles to integrate with what she already knew.

There are dozens of *zhiye xuexiao* in town, so people who are interested in joining one can check online for options, or ask local friends for recommendations. Fees vary depending on the school and the course.

Black Sesame Kitchen

Jen Lin Liu is known as a *New York Times* journalist-turned author of a book on Sichuan Cuisine. She recently set up Black Sesame Kitchen (BSK), a place that has become quite popular to those interested in Chinese cooking.

BSK's classes are taught by Chinese chefs specializing in a certain cuisine, with Liu beside them, providing language interpretation. It holds classes every Saturday afternoon and Wine 'n' Dine, every Friday night, a six-course set meal with free-flow drinks. Private classes are available by appointment.

Where: 3 Heizhima Hutong, Dongcheng District

Tel: 13691474408

Web site: blacksesamekitchen.com

Cost: 300 yuan per person for the Saturday class; 250 yuan per person for the Wine 'n' Dine

Hutong Cuisine

Zhou Chunyi, who hails from Guangdong Province, started a cooking class in town three years ago. She teaches Sichuan and Cantonese cuisine from 10:30 am every day except Wednesday. She also takes students on a market tour, and those interested in participating should come at 8:30 am.

Zhou said she can take a maximum of seven students per class, because she teaches at home, and her kitchen has limited space. She conducts private cooking lessons in the evening by appointment.

Where: 3 Shajing Hutong, Dongcheng district

Tel: 8401 4788

Web site: hutongcuisine.com

Cost: 180 yuan for morning sessions

FESCO

As one of the first organizations that help foreigners adjust to work and life in China, FESCO has been running Chinese cooking classes for years.

A woman surnamed Feng from the training center said that lessons are conducted in the kitchen of various hotels. FESCO provides a list of home-style recipes that students can learn; consequently, participants can indicate what they want to learn.

Where: Locations vary

Tel: 6777 1027 ext 1015

Cost: 1,000 yuan for 10 dishes over three lessons (100 yuan per hour for an English interpreter, with cost to be split among requesting parties).

Popcooking Kitchen

A stylish cooking school, markedly different from regular cooking schools, opened in the CBD area.

Qian Dacheng, manager of Popcooking, said the school found a market for well-off Beijingers who want to learn to make different types of cuisine in a cozy environment. "There are many cooking schools like us in Japan and South Korean, but we are the first chic cooking school in China," Qian said.

The school was established in October 2007, and its business is looking up. Popcooking offers lessons in Chinese home-style cooking, Western cuisine and baked goods, as well as recipes specially created for women who are concerned with health and beauty. It has around 25 teachers who have worked as chefs at well-known restaurants.

Where: 3/F, Building 11, Jianwai Soho, 39, Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5869 8557

Web site: Popcooking.com.cn

Cost: Fees range from several hundred to 2,500 yuan, depending on the course



Young locals enjoy a cooking class.

Photo provided by Qian Dacheng

Remembering the of Chinese modern

By He Jianwei

From 9:15 to 10 am on February 5, Zhang Nian held a chunk of ice shaped like an egg as the sun melted it in Ritan Park. The melting was a piece for the 20th Anniversary of China Avant-Garde Exhibition.

Twenty years ago, Zhang sat down on a straw mat surrounded by dozens of raw eggs hanging from a paper around his neck that read, "To avoid the future generation, no debates during hatching." It was his performance at the 1989 China Avant-Garde Exhibition held in the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC).

It was at this exhibition 20 years ago that his works were first shown and the West first saw contemporary Chinese art. Two decades later, the reunited to remember the idealism of their past and discuss the problems contemporary art has faced over these 20 years.

Idealist or sell out

A half-hour after Zhang finished hatching his ice egg on the second floor of the NAMOC in 1989, gunfire rang out on the lower floor. The shots were fired by Xiao Lu as part of her installation. Critics called her gunshots the final curtain at the end of the '85 New Wave Art Movement, a vague period of time in the mid-80s when Chinese Avant-Garde emerged.

The Wall Art Museum has a documentary exhibition about the movement with photos, videos, letters and exhibitions archived from the China Avant-Garde Exhibition. All documents were collected by Gao Minglu, one of the curators at the time.

The works were "fresh and novel." And Gao could not disguise his excitement when he recalled his first glimpse of the artists' works in the 1989 exhibition. "The young artists used artistic language to express their inner

thoughts. They had a deeper understanding of the freedom of creativity," Gao said.

As an editor of an art magazine and newspaper, Gao collected contemporary works and talked with young artists in the mid 1980s. He found a new trend in the art world that moved toward the abstract.

When the '85 New Wave Art Movement began, Zhang Nian was a college student in the Central Academy of Arts and Design, now the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University. The teachers in the college brought new ideas to the students through modern pop art.

"It was really a great shock for us when we saw modern works. I started to think about how art is made," Zhang said. In 1986, Zhang began to create experimental works.

When he looked back to the 1980s, he said his works and those of his peers reflected a "simple and sometimes naive

imagining of the future."

"Each generation has a dream. Our dream in the 1980s was utopian, and we would do anything for that imaginary ideal. But now people have a more definite purpose for which they will devote everything," he said.

After the 1989 exhibition, Zhang said he sensed great changes in society in that "many people talked about money and seldom discussed art, literature and philosophy." Many of his friends began to do business. "Some sold steel or cars and some ran advertising agencies."

From 1990 to 1994 he was in a deep depression. He was poor and produced little creative work. "I doubted whether my life had any value."

Two years later, he and some of his friends started a company. Zhang knew he was not good at doing business, because "I always thought about art and philosophy," he said.

In 1999, he was back to art. He made a performance that memorialized the 10th anniversary of the China Avant-Garde Exhibition.

time, he threw raw eggs at a board. "My utopia cracked open," he said.

Since 2000, the market has become a driving force in the development and promotion of contemporary art, and works by Chinese artists have been setting sales records. More and more artists, collectors and investors are experimenting with the form.

Zhang said many artists bragged about many pieces they have sold and how many exhibitions have hosted their work. "Art has become public relations," he said.

He said the market is important for artists because they need it to live, to earn money and to create more works. But he said the problem is that fewer artists are creating works which reflect modern reality.

"The contemporary art market was so large that many artists plagiarized both themselves and other artists," Gao said.



Dialogue, by Xiao Lu



Analysis of the World, by Xu Bing



X ? Series No 3, by Zhang Peili



Panel discussion in 1989

Western or Chinese thought

Looking back at the '85 New Wave Art Movement, most works were rooted in Western philosophy. Critics say it was nothing but a rehearsal of Western art in China.

In the 1980s, most Western classics of the social sciences were translated and published on the Chinese mainland. According to statistics, some 1,500 social science books were published from 1985 to 1987.

When Zhang stayed in Beijing in the 1980s, he discussed art and philosophy with his friends. Existentialism influenced him the most. He read many books about Jean Paul Sartre and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. "I began to think about the issue of existence," he said.

Xiao Lu also said if a man could not discuss philosophy, he would be un-dateable. Talking about philosophers was trendy among young lovers in the 1980s.

The Western philosophies, as Zhang depicted, provided enlightenment ideas to those young students and artists.

Using their works as a background, the 1980s artists cast the mold for Chinese contemporary

art. The field has been intertwined with Western philosophy ever since.

In the 1990s, post-modernism took the art world by storm. This decade's artists focused more on globalization, urbanization and other social issues. "Vague fragments were the subject of artists, especially photographers. I have seen too many similar works," Gao said.

Gao believes the next two or three years will be critical for contemporary Chinese art. It is time for both artists and theorists to create a Chinese theory.

The probing began in the 1980s, when Huang Yongping tackled the relationship between Dadaism and Chinese Zen; Gu Wenda tried to bridge West and East with ink and wash.

"Although the new generation's work is native in its images, they still borrow Western philosophy," Gao said.

In an international panel discussion a few years ago, a critic from Europe asked Gao what the philosophic root of Chinese contemporary art was. He could not answer.

Trying to create a Chinese theory is not the same as retreating into tradition to search for

a corresponding theory, Zhang said. "If we can create a Chinese approach to art, then Chinese artists can be important internationally and can produce a real master," Zhang said.

Gao and other critics and theorists are working on the problem. "I hope in the next 10 years, we can create the foundation of a new art system. At the very least we can form a genre in our contemporary art," he said.

Artist or critic

In the 1980s, art was closely related with society. Intellectuals in literature, philosophy and other social sciences were involved in the art field. "Artists believed their work must communicate with their audience, and that their work went beyond the art circles," Gao said.

After art made it into the market, the intellectuals lost their independent observations. "Art has become a 'thing' ... and the critic and artist have built a partnership," he said.

Zhang described the relationship between artist and critic as a business relationship. "Words have more power than artistic work, sometimes, because a critic is easier to access," he said.

Artists are more perceptual than critics. Critics are more rational than artists. "Many artists cannot make a rational analysis of their own work, and critics need a broader view to see real problems. I call it an academic relationship," Gao said.

Zhang said a good critic takes time to communicate with the artist spiritually. "Now there aren't any critics who look at an artist's whole life to record, take note and analyze the artist's works from his or her own perspective," he said.

Both Gao and Zhang said the involvement of Western critics is good for the development of contemporary Chinese art. "Contemporary art in the West has developed for more than 100 years. Their critics know more about the relationship between money, market and art," Gao said.

But it is difficult for Western critics and Chinese artists and critics to see eye to eye. "The government does not have a foundation for communication, and some colleges are conservative toward academic communication," he said. It is up to galleries and artistic institutions to take the first step.

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1,2 Zhang Nian's performance in 1989 and 2009
3 Waiting, by Zhang Nian

Photos provided by Institute of Gao
Luming Modern and Contemporary
Art and Zhang Nian

The rise and fall of Marlon Brando

By Charles Zhu

Though there are already many biographies about Marlon Brando, one of the greatest screen actors of all time, Stephan Kanfer's *Somebody, The Reckless and Remarkable Career of Marlon Brando* (350pp, Knopf, US \$26.95) offers a new look into his life.

It was called the first serious biography about the actor since his death in 2004. The actor's life, Kanfer says, was one "of ludicrous excess, outlandish triumphs and appalling sorrows."

More than 50 years ago, Brando portrayed Stanley Kowalski, a brute and rapist, in the movie version of Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar named Desire*. His talent gave Kowalski a touch of intelligence and charm and his melancholy face over a muscled body looked tough and helped him achieve extraordinary success. Williams wrote the young Brando a telegram which claimed: "From the greasy Polack you will someday arrive at the gloomy Dane, for you have something that makes the theater a world of great possibilities."

Marlon Brando was born on April 3, 1924, in Omaha, Nebraska, to a chalk salesman father and a frustrated actress mother.

Acting was a skill he learned as a child, the lonely son of often alcoholic parents. With his father away on business trips, and his mother frequently sauced, the young boy would act to draw her out of her stupor and earn some affection. Despite her extraordinary neglect of him, Brando still loved her.

He arrived in New York in 1943 at the age of 19, a military school dropout from a broken Midwestern home, and enrolled in Erwin Piscator's Dramatic Workshop at New York's New School. There he was mentored by Stella Adler, a member of a famous Yiddish Theatre acting family who declared "this puppy thing will be America's finest actor."

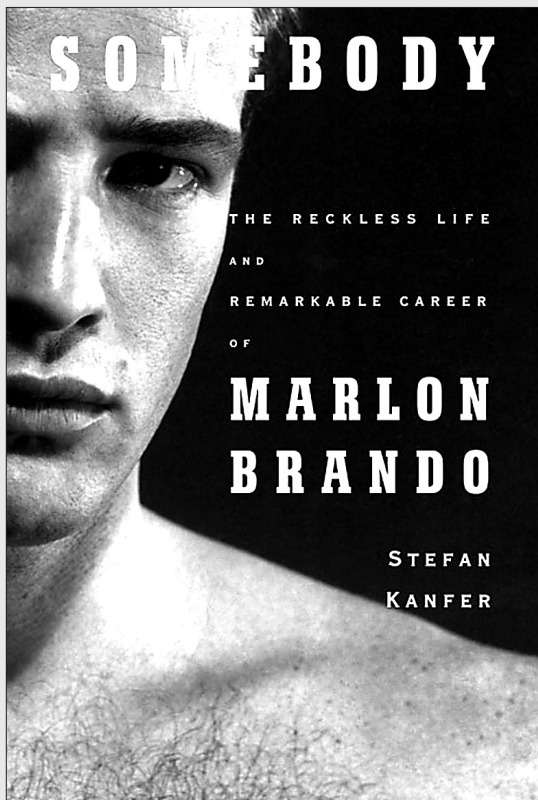
After *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for which he received the first of his eight Academy Award nominations, Brando appeared in a string of Award-nominated performances: *Viva Zapata!* (1952), *Julius Caesar* (1953) and the summit of his early career, *On the Waterfront* (1954).

Brando attracted media attention at the age of 24 when *Life* magazine ran a photo of himself and his sister Jocelyn. The fascination grew. To play a paraplegic soldier in *The Men* (1950), Brando lived at a hospital with disabled veterans and used a wheelchair for weeks. Such research was unheard of in Hollywood at the time.

During 1955-62, Brando established himself as a great actor and a Top 10 movie star, although that star began to fall after his earlier box-office high *Sayonara* (1957). Following in Elizabeth Taylor's footsteps, Brando became the second performer to receive a US \$1-million salary for a motion picture.

Speaking of Brando's later performances, Kanfer said his talents survived and he was "the same man with the same extraordinary aptitude for inhabiting a character, just older and heavier," adding he "still allowed viewers to see the whole Brando, a man at risk, a vastly overweight, compulsive figure for whom meals had become what strong drink had been to his parents."

Richard Burton, a keen movie industry observer, said that he found Brando to be very bright. Brando's problem, Burton felt, was that he was unique, and that he had gotten too much fame too soon at too early an age. Cut off from being nurtured by normal contact with society, fame had distorted Brando's personality and his ability to cope with the world, as he had not had time to grow up outside the limelight.



Man's diary captures Beijing's past

By Annie Wei

Most histories focus on major social events, but with a sterile eye that separates detail from life. But history is a tapestry woven by thousands of individuals, and this diary contains one thread: the life of a normal man who lived 70 years ago.

The Beijing Diary (People's Publishing House, 35 yuan) was written by Dong Yi, a man born into a family of feudal officials in 1918. With China divided internally into the hands of warlords and an invasion from the east, his family began to collapse. In September 1938, Dong was enrolled in the Chinese Department of Furen Catholic University, formerly of Beijing Normal University. The moment of his life captured in these diaries is the Japanese invasion.

On July 7, 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident shocked the world and China launched a bloody rebellion against invading Japanese troops. Dong wrote about how the incident affected local Beijingers at that time.

"Most families have been affected by the event. Students cannot go to college or have to postpone enrollment for another two or three years. Families, brothers and best friends are separated," Dong said.

Daily life was heavily affected by a price hike. "The cost of goods has shot up. Sugar costs 1.08 yuan per jin (500 grams), more expensive than meat, which money cannot even buy. All food is scarce, and we don't know what will be available tomorrow! We bought 123 jin of rice, which cost 44.70 yuan, at an average 0.36 yuan per jin; rice used to cost only 0.1 yuan per jin. The cost of noodles jumped 700 percent. We also heard that a bag of flour costs 40 yuan, which is unheard of," he said.

The diary was written while China



was at war with Japan. It describes the writer and his friends' daily life, and how young people reacted in the face of such trauma.

Dong wrote on March 12, 1929, "I think of many friends and relatives who I know or was told have moved south. Some told their stories and the hard times through which they have gone. I admire them and their courage, and feel ashamed I could not go with them."

The south refers to Chongqing and Kunming, the main battlegrounds. In Beijing, anti-Japanese sentiment was thick. A diary entry dated January 5, 1941 says, "Two Japanese soldiers and a Japanese man were killed by a Chinese man. Rumors said the killer was riding an unbranded, loaner bicycle. Now the city is after everyone who is riding one."

The handwritten diary was recovered from the Baoguoqi culture market by Wang Jinchang, a collector. There are 20 diaries, a total 150,000 characters, which record Dong's life from April 11, 1938 to December 15, 1943. The four years from 1939 to 1942 are complete.

Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers.

The Sea

By John Banville, 208pp, US \$25.95, Knopf

This is a luminous novel about love, loss and the unpredictable power of memory. The narrator is Max Morden, a middle-aged Irishman who, soon after his wife's death, has gone back to the seaside town where he spent his summer holidays as a child to retreat from the grief, anger and the numbness of life without her. But it is also a return to the place where he met the Graces, the well-heeled vacationing family with whom he experienced the strange suddenness of both love and death for the first time. The seductive mother; the imperious father; the twins – Chloe, fiery and forthright, and Myles, silent and expressionless – in whose mysterious connection Max became profoundly entangled, each of them a part of the "barely bearable raw immediacy" of his childhood memories.

Lord of the Flies (50th Anniversary Edition)

By William Golding, 336pp, US \$25.00, Perigee Trade

Lord of the Flies remains as provocative today as when it was first published in 1954, igniting passionate debate

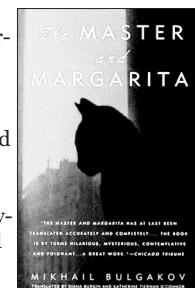
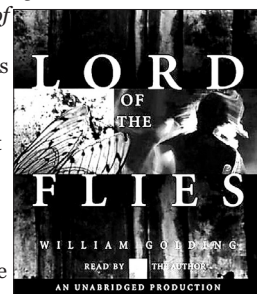
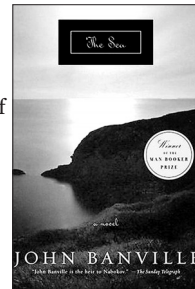
with its startling, brutal portrait of human nature. Though critically acclaimed, it was largely ignored upon its initial publication. Yet soon it became a cult favorite among both students and literary critics who compared it to J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* in its influence on modern thought and literature.

The Master and Margarita

By Mikhail Bulgakov, 384pp, US \$13.00, Vintage

The devil makes an appearance in Moscow accompanied by various demons, including a naked girl and a huge black cat. When he leaves, the asylums are full and the forces of law and order in disarray. Only the Master, a man devoted to truth, and Margarita, the woman he loves, can resist the devil's onslaught.

(By He Jianwei)



Speed travel puts flash focus on the unfamiliar

By Zhang Dongya

When most people think of travel, they think of covering long distances at a leisurely pace. But in fast-paced city life, travel too needs to be accomplished in a flash. The Douban.com user group for speed travelers is trying to organize already tense urban dwellers to meet up for single day burst trips to unfamiliar cities. The participants are strangers – Internet acquaintances at best. But for them, the lack of a familiar face only adds to the excitement.

An on-the-road lifestyle

For Li Xu, 25, founder of the group, life has been “on the road” since he found his first job after graduating from university last year. “I was always gone on a business trip,” Li said. His company, based in Shanghai, sent him to Beijing and then Xiamen.

“Traveling on one’s own can be lonely. I guessed there must be other people like me who have to make a quick visit to a city for business or other reasons,” he said. “So I thought, what if we could travel together?”

Li gave his idea a fancy Chinese name: Shanwan, which means literally “flash play.”

He founded an Internet group for Shanwan at the beginning of the year. It helps people “fly to a new city with several strangers and travel for a single day,” according to its entry on Douban.com.

During Spring Festival, Li began to organize participants for the group’s first event.

At the beginning, Li set a high threshold for membership. To be “flash,” the group had to fly back and forth. Participants were required to have strong finances to support the expensive airfare. The original plan called for a one-day glimpse of the city rather than spending the night.

Travel still core of the meet

While searching for members, Li realized the idea would be hard to put into practice.

Lu Na, 25, a middle school teacher and the first other member, considered his plan a “performance art.” “It carries a high cost, and it is more a ‘performance’ since a group of strangers will meet in an unfamiliar city in the morning and depart in the evening. We want to travel, so that should remain our focus,” Lu said.

Li admitted his description of the event was worded much like a “stunt,” and said they would adjust details like extending the duration of travel later.

Lu said for her, the most important thing the group brought was making the decision to travel available on impulse.

“Before, there would be countless reasons to stop you from traveling: insufficient time, fatigue and fear of traveling alone. But now, after we agreed on the destination and date, we can set off without a second thought,” Lu said.

The group’s first event will be held this weekend, when four or five strangers head for Tianjin. Lu, one of the participants, will head from Harbin to Tianjin, which she said was a city she had wanted to visit for a long time. The others will set out from Beijing, Shenyang and Shenzhen. They plan to meet in Tianjin and walk around to have a look at the city. The ones from Beijing will return in the evening, and others will stay for another day.

“This kind of short stay does not have an exact itinerary. We will just meet somewhere, take some pictures and try to get a feel for the local customs,” Lu said.

Friends for a day

Since February, 15 more people have committed to the event, and another 40 said they were interested in it. “Most people are 20-something, single, have a high-paying job and are female. It’s an interesting group,” Li said.

But as much as the speed traveling itself, the chance to meet new people is a great attraction for the participants.

One group member “Wuyu” said she preferred to meet strangers while traveling. “The event has helped introduce us to a group of strangers It can be more exciting to see new faces in a new place, even if it’s just sitting beside them on a bus or at a table for dinner.”

“We met online, had a business trip in the same city and saw each other during our brief trip,” Li said. “Maybe we will lose contact and never see each other again, but it can still be a nice trip and a good memory.”

The group has organized its second event in Shanghai on February 27. Li said it began when a woman he knew online said she had to go there, and he decided to go too, and from there on to Guangxi. Members suggested the third trip, scheduled for March, should be to Wuhan, when the city is at its peak season for viewing cherry blossoms.



CFP Photo

Brand-name goods to borrow

By Zhang Dongya

In the *Sex and the City* movie, Carrie Bradshaw was amazed that Louise, a woman applying to be her personal assistant, carried around a Patchwork Denim Bowley Louis Vuitton. When Bradshaw asked her how an unemployed woman living in New York City with three flatmates could afford such a bag, Louise said, "It's rented. Bag – borrow or steal."

Beijing also has shops that provide the same service – good news for many who cannot afford brand-name totes, but would like the chance to be flashy on a big date, a wedding dinner or a company party at a fraction of the cost.



Dior



Louis Vuitton



Louis Vuitton

V2 for handbag addicts

V2, opened in 2004, is the first shop in town to rent out luxury handbags. Their collection includes clutches, evening bags, day bags and purses, and encompasses brands like Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada and Burberry.

Since V2's business is mainly in product exchanges, all its bags are second-hand; some are brand-new, while some are 70 or 80 percent of their original condition. But all items are well-maintained and guaranteed authentic.

A sales clerk surnamed Gao said the shop acquires its goods based on criteria like quality of material, craftsmanship and accessories. Although genuine brand-name bags have serial numbers, some fakes fabricate numbers. "If there are products whose authenticity we cannot

discern, we will choose to give them up," Gao said.

For short-term rentals like one to three days, the bags go for three to five percent of the retail price; for longer use, the rental goes up to 20 percent. A deposit equivalent to the bag's full cost is required.

V2 purchases bags from its clients; it can also sell goods for them. The shop offers to buy at a relatively low price, so most customers opt to have it resell their bags at a commission. The shop will keep the goods for two months for 20 percent of the sale price. The owners can determine the price or take advice from V2's salespeople.

The shop can help identify the authenticity of bags that are up for resale; outside of this, the service is not offered.

V2 also sells shoes, clothing, jewelry, sunglasses and other accessories. The shoes and clothing are also second-hand, but with the guarantee that they have never been worn.

"Our clients are mainly people who have impulsively purchased shoes and bags abroad only to find out later that these do not suit them. The goods are left unused until they reach the second-hand market," Gao said.

She said the busiest season for handbag rentals occur just before holidays like Spring Festival, and that the most popular products are evening bags, which are relatively inexpensive.

She recommends evening bags like Chanel (5,000 yuan full price; 150 yuan per day), Dior (1,500 yuan full price; 45

yuan per day) and Prada (1,800 yuan full price; 54 yuan per day).

V2 has two branches in Chaoyang District, and it plans to open another in Haidian District this year.

Main branch

Where: 4302, 3/F, Building 4, Jianwai Soho, 39 Dong'erhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 1-6 pm (Monday and Tuesday), 11 am – 8 pm (Wednesday to Sunday)

Tel: 5166 0088

Second branch

Where: 20 Dixia Shangye Jie, Tianyuan Center, Bing 2, Dong'erhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8446 4090



Chanel bags

Photos provided by V2

Cord 3 for the latest fashion

Cord 3, based in Japan, opened its first overseas shop in Beijing last June. It rents out the latest fashion, including clothes and accessories for the entertainment industry.

Customers usually go to the shop for one-of-a-kind evening dresses or jewelry, particularly pieces that resemble those worn by stars in movies or TV ads – but at a more affordable price.

The company has purchasers that travel around the world looking for the latest fashion. Besides brands like Chanel, Prada and Dior, Cord 3's collection include clothing and accessories by Japanese designers like Eley Kishimoto and Akiko Ogawa.

But it also carries "regular" clothing like T-shirts, blouses, jackets, coats, skirts and dresses in varied styles and colors. It also has footwear like

sandals and boots, jewelry, glasses and handbags.

Since its products are only for rent, each piece has a unique price, although it is negotiable. The shop requires a deposit, about five times the cost of rental.

Their items are priced quite high, for example, 80 yuan for a camisole or over 1,000 yuan for a Gucci dress. Cord 3's salespeople say the money is worth it, since the items have been worn by stars. But for celebrities, the staff will inform them if some big name has already appeared in public in a particular dress.

Where: 1122, Building D, Chaowai Soho, Guandongdian Sixiang, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 7 pm (Monday to Friday)

Tel: 5900 3893

Other shops

Guzhuo

The shop rents out second-hand luxury goods like jeans and fur garments, specifically for men.

Where: No 2, 69 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8401 2346

Liumei

It rents out second-hand luxury items like handbags, jewelry and watches.

Where: V1162, 9, Jianwai Soho, 39 Dong'erhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 13601116846

Savoring every morsel of beef

By Zheng Lu

Although the issue of contaminated milk still haunts us, happily we still have safe beef to eat. Paoding Jie Niu, or dismembering an ox as skillfully as a butcher, is an old idiom that refers to someone who can discern the rules of the universe. Knowing the different cuts of beef is not exactly unlocking the mysteries of the universe, but it is a first step to feeding your mind and body.



Tenderloin

The famous filet, it is hidden behind the sirloin. It is the muscle that the cow uses the least, so it is the most tender part of meat with very little fat. Only two lumps of such flesh can be found in each cattle. Tenderloin cannot be over-roasted, otherwise opt for the rib eye. At most, it can be roasted to medium-well, but medium is recommended. Chefs will not waste even a single portion of the tenderloin, so unlike the other beef cuts, this filet keeps its original round shape.

Tasty
Where: 3/F, Jiamao Shopping Mall, 1 Xizhimen Wai Dajie 1, Xicheng District
Dish: Filet (40 yuan)
Tel: 5830 1780

Chuck

This is from the cow's shoulder area, a piece that will taste as tough as leather if it is prepared like a steak. Chinese dishes, however, favor it for stewing because of its firm texture and sharply contoured shape. Most hamburgers available at fast food restaurants are also made from chuck.

New York House
Where: 2/F, Building 5, Huaqing Jiayuan, Wudaokou, Haidian District
Dish: Beef burger (25 yuan)
Tel: 8286 7128



Striploin

New York Strip Steak is made from this cut. It is the longest flesh on the back of the cattle and has tender tendons and thick fibers. Its fat sections are not as even as those of the rib eye, but it has a very "beefy" taste; likely the reason why it is a favorite of many gourmets.

Friday's
Where: 1/F, Catic Plaza Hotel, 18 Beichen Dong Lu, Chaoyang District, Hua Peng Mansion, 19 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District, and Beijing Friendship Hotel Grand Building, 1 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District
Dish: New York Strip (258 yuan)
Tel: 8497 0650 (Catic Plaza Hotel), 6597 5314 (Hua Peng Mansion), 6849 8738 (Beijing Friendship Hotel)



Ox tongue

Ox tongue is generally cooked by barbecuing. The tip of the tongue is the toughest part, while the tongue root is the freshest. Believe it or not, an ox tongue weighs at least 1.8 kilograms.

Genawang Brazilian Grill
Where: Xi Peilou, Fenghua Haojing, 6 Guang'anmen Nei Dajie, Xuanwu District
Dish: Grilled Ox Tongue (Yankao Niushe, 68 yuan)
Tel: 6356 0050

Shank

This is the muscle wrapped by a thin piece of film in the animal's thigh, and 99 percent of the shank is edible. Since it is pliable and rich in pectin, it is suitable for soups and stews. It is also the choice piece for the Italian dish Veal Paupiette Osso Buco Style, which is braised with vegetables, white wine and seasoned stock.

Kaorouwan Fanzhuang Restaurant
Where: 58 Nanlishi Lu, (100 meters south of the west gate of the Children's Hospital), Xicheng District
Dish: Braised Beef Tendon in Brown Sauce (Hong Shao Ti Jin, 38 yuan)
Tel: 6802 8180

Rib eye

This part is a rather pretty lump of flesh, with a big flower-like section of fat at the center that looks like an eye, thus its name. The flesh is located close to the animal's chest, lying between the sixth and the eighth rib, so it is also referred to as "short ribs." It is the top choice for cooking, whether for steak or hot pot.

A cook at the Wangpin Taisu Steak Restaurant named Yang Shaogui said that their signature dish is made from this cut. "The fat sections here are well-distributed and can endure the high temperatures of grilling. Filet, on the other hand, must be roasted quickly at a high heat to prevent the fat from oozing," he said.

Wangpin Taisu Steak Restaurant
Where: B10 (Basement 1), Shidai Mingmen, 8 Beichen Dong Lu, Chaoyang District
Dish: Steak (Wangpin Taisu Niupai, 239 yuan)
Tel: 8498 5734

Brisket and flank

These pieces of beef are quite tough and chewy, best for Chinese dishes or curries. They are easy to cook to achieve the right flavor and texture; the only problem is that their fat sections are not evenly distributed, so they need to be cooked with other ingredients.

Asian Star
Where: 26 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu (south of Changhong Qiao), Chaoyang District
Dish: Curry Beef (52 yuan)
Tel: 6582 5306

T-bone

This is a T-shaped bone close to the short loin. The reason people love it is because it leaves them wanting more. One side of the bone can be used for New York Strip and the other side, the tenderloin, for filets.

Weilanxi Restaurant
Where: 75 Wanquanhe Lu, Haidian District
Dish: T-bone steak (68 yuan)
Tel: 6263 6026

Sirloin

This cut has rich and evenly distributed fat sections, but because it is located in a part of the cow that is seldom used, it is not quite so tasty. According to a tale, it was British king Henry the Eighth's favorite cut, thus he named it "Sir Loin."

Haoshanghao Steak Restaurant
Where: 133 Xidan Bei Dajie, Xicheng District
Dish: Sirloin (38 yuan)
Tel: 6608 2002

Round

Remember this general rule: To get a tender piece of beef, go for the part that the animal least exercises, unlike the round which is muscular.

This cut tastes quite tough, like chuck. It goes well with the liquor and rich dishes of northeastern China. Because it contains little fat, it is normally used for dishes like Braised Beef in Sauce and beef noodles. Minced meat at supermarkets comes from either this or chuck.

Meizhou Dongpo Restaurant
Where: Building 111, Huizhong Bei Li, Chaoyang District
Dish: Braised Beef with Bamboo Shoots (38 yuan)
Tel: 6480 0776

Artist, sociologist and philosopher in one

By Li Jing

Breaking Through the Ice, unveiled at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) last weekend, is a new session of Qiu Zhijie's Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge Project. Unlike the previous two sessions, this exhibition comprises a giant installation, including a huge sinking ship. The installation is made up of about 30 separate artworks, including ink paintings, sculptures and other installations.

Like its predecessors, this session of the Project looks at the suicides that happen on the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge. Qiu said suicide is a part of life, which is what concerns Chinese philosophers. "Reflecting on suicide is a way to reflect on life and the surrounding world," he said. Death was one of Qiu's first subjects, in works such as gravestones.

Qiu's output is based on fieldwork and documentary research. "I don't believe in inspiration," he said. "In fact, masters never rely on inspiration. For example, Yao Ming's performance never depends on inspiration. Neither does a professional artist's." When Qiu started the project, he looked through historical documents and photographs,

and spoke with people who contemplated suicide from the bridge. His inquiry is considered one of the largest artistic-cum-sociological experiment in the Chinese art world.

"Sociological research is a bridge between society and art, which ensures that art is neither removed from the concerns of society nor a tool of politics," Qiu said. Furthermore, he said, "Fieldwork cultivates new ideas and avoids prejudice ... While out on field, I always ask myself to complete sentences in the pattern of 'I thought ... but I found ...'"

Qiu's mode of expression encompasses photography, video, calligraphy, painting, installations and performance art. He said every form of creating is a kind of training and reflecting on oneself.

He imbues contemporary art with a deep-rooted traditional spirituality, resulting in an integration of the spirit of Chinese literati and the avant-garde.

Breaking through the Ice – Qiu Zhijie Solo Exhibition

Where: UCCA, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 15, daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 8459 9269

5 Friday, February 20

Exhibition

Dragon Bones – Li Shuguang Solo Exhibition

This is the Anhui artist's first solo exhibition in Beijing.

Where: China Art Seasons, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 26, daily except Monday, 10:30 am – 6:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6431 1900

Movie

The Lonious Monk Straight No Chaser

Where: Lanyang Bookstore, 3

Shuimo Xinqu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6265 5069

Paranoid Park

Where: Blue Bud Cafe, Guangwang Hutong, Jiugulou Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8404 5129

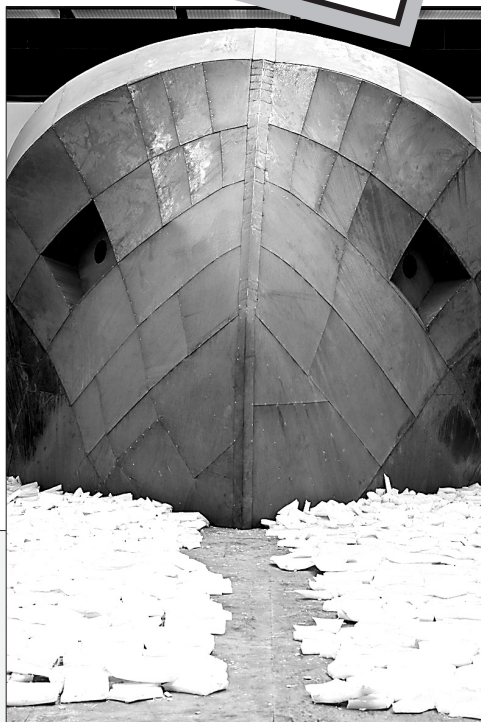
Nightlife

Bad Apple

The born-in-California band will perform a combination of rock, reggae and blues.

Upcoming

Nightlife
Mr. Mojo
 Mr. Mojo brings a raucous evening for fans of 1960s rock and classic blues.
 Where: Salud, 66 Nanlouguxiang, Dongcheng District
 When: February 27, 9 pm
 Admission: Free
 Tel: 6402 5086



Where: Lotus Blue (inside Lotus Lane), 51-56 Di'anmen Dong Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 9 pm

Tel: 6617 2599

Randomk(e)

Where: Mao Live House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm

Cost: 50 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

6 Saturday, February 21

Exhibition

Peripheral Vision – Huang Zhiyang Solo Exhibition



Huang presents the highlights of his most recently completed works – art that resulted from living in society's periphery with an attitude of ambivalence.

Where: Pekin Fine Arts, 241 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 30, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5127 3220

Deng Jianjin Solo Prints Exhibition

Where: 3+3 Space, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28, daily 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6437 9942

Paper East Paintings West – Young Artists Group Exhibition

Five young artists explore cre-

ativity on paper.

Where: 94 Space, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 12, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 0467

What Makes Me Understand What I Know? – He An Solo Exhibition

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 22, daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 8459 9269

Movie

Quitting

This documentary, which spans a decade, follows the life of an actor named Jiang Hongsheng.

Where: Yufeng Bookstore, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 62701 9288

Nightlife

Planet Map

This band dishes out indie pop.

Where: What Bar, 72 Beichang Jie, Xicheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan (includes a drink)

Tel: 13341122757

7 Sunday, February 22

Exhibition

Rearview Mirror – A Retrospective of

Chen Yufei's Work

Where: Magee Art Gallery, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 9, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9034

Lust Suppression – Deng Jianjin Solo Exhibition



Deng reveals human beings' spiritual alienation and their deepest feelings, desires and fantasies such as sex through a language that breaks conventions.

His pioneering work, a result of much hardship, has attracted attention and controversy.

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 22, daily 10 am – 5 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5876 0600

Spring – Young Artists Group Exhibition

Where: New Age Gallery, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 20, daily except Monday, 11:30 am – 6:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9282

Nightlife

Zhao Yiran

The Ningxia-born guitarist plays folk music influenced by the blues and the country's northwestern folk music.

Where: Jiangjinjiu Bar, 2 Zhongku Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8405 0124

Stage in March

Concert

Israeli Jazz Pianist Yaron Herman Recital

Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: March 1, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Vienna Philharmonic Concert

Who: Conducted by Zubin Mehta

Where: National Grand Theater Concert Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 8-9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

China Philharmonic Orchestra 2008-2009 Music Festival

Who: Conducted by Okko Kamu

Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: March 13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Sarah Brightman World Tour 2009

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 54 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District

When: March 22, 7:30 pm

Admission: 380-2,000 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

China Philharmonic Orchestra 2008-2009 Music Festival

Who: Conducted by Jin Wang

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: March 28, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

Alexander Paley Piano Recital

Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: March 29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Dance

Onegin

Who: China National Ballet

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 1, 7:30 pm

Admission: 120-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Mei Lanfang

Who: The Guangzhou Ballet

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 6-8, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Raise the Red Lantern

Who: China National Ballet

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 14-15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-600 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

A Handful of Wild Jujubes

Who: Directed by Zhang Jigang

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 10-12, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By Li Jing)

Getting the most out of your walk

By Venus Lee

Albert Einstein was an avid walker. According to one anecdote, when he was invited to visit the queen of Belgium, officials were puzzled as he was nowhere to be found at the rail station. He arrived very late, having departed the train one stop early and walked the entire distance on his own for fun.

Walking is regarded as the perfect exercise by Taoists. It's easy and free, and accessible by people of almost any age and body type. Most people take walking for granted, but as simple as it may seem, there are ways to do it better.

Posture problems

According to Deng, there are several common posture mistakes people make while walking:

1. Hunching or stooping: If you walk this way for an extended time, you will eventually become bow-backed. The habit only gets worse, and a hump back can decrease oxygen to the brain and strain the whole body.

2. Soft belly: If you need to lose weight, then here's something else to keep in mind. The belly should not stick out while walking, so suck it in and hold it.

3. Little kicks: Some people worry sewage or mud will soil their clothing and walk with small kicks. These steps strain the waist. It can cause your legs to become abnormally large.

4. Toes pointing out: This kind of gait rotates the knees outward, and after many years it can cause the legs to take on an X-shape. According to Chinese medical theory, walking this way will obstruct a person's Yang channel, which slows blood flow to the liver, spleen and kidney, and eventually to the brain.

5. Toes turned in: Although it may look cute, walking this way can cause one to become permanently knock-kneed. Chinese medicine suggests this gait will harm the gall bladder, stomach and bladder, which are located close to the spinal cord. Over time, this can also reduce blood flow to the brain.

6. Tiptoes: Walking on your tiptoes, as when wearing high heels, causes lower leg muscles to become overdeveloped – a rather unsightly look.

7. No warm-up or abrupt stop: Stretch before walking to avoid pulling a muscle. It is also wrong to stop abruptly at the end of your walk; this can cause a rapid change in blood pressure that may leave you feeling faint.

How to improve

"Posture is essential in getting the most out of a walk," Haiyong, a standing committee member of the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine and board member of Beijing Chinese Medicine Academic Society's bone traumatology department, said.

He has several suggestions to help walkers maintain a proper posture.

Step 1: Stand tall when walking to improve your spinal posture and prevent pain or strain in the back. While many people feel leaning forward will help them walk faster, it puts pressure on the muscles and can result in a sore, tight back. When walking, try to stretch by lifting the torso and keeping the top of the head parallel to the sky.

Step 2: Keep the head up and eyes forward while walking and keep your neck aligned with your body. It is common to look down while walking, but this can strain your neck. Keep your neck and shoulder muscles relaxed.

Step 3: Shrug your shoulders from time to time to release tension. Shoulders should be aligned with the body, not rolled back or forward. The occasional shrug will help recognize and reduce tension, which in turn improves posture.

Step 4: Improve posture with proper body mechanics while walking. Suck in your gut and tighten your butt to support the lower back and add to the workout. Roll the feet

When you walk the streets worrying about the economy, the environment or next month's rent, how you are walking is probably the last thing on your mind. The rapid pace of modern life leaves people with less and less time to exercise. Walking—the easiest and most convenient way to stay fit—is consequentially getting more and more popular.

"But walking with poor posture harms your body by limiting your oxygen supply, and it may result in injury," Deng Jingyuan, chief physician at the rehabilitation department of the first affiliated hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University Medicine College, said.

heel to toe with each step and keep your hands cupped but relaxed. Arms should be bent at 90 degree and held at waist level, and should swing back to forward, not across the body.

Learning good posture and form takes time. Be mindful of your posture until it develops into a healthy habit. Good posture can make one look great, feel great and burn more fat.

Other Tips

Walking pace

Leisurely strolls do not count as exercise. If you are in good health, you need to set a goal for the pace you would like to achieve, but start slowly. Set a target heart rate based on your age. Your target zone should be 60 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate. If you are in poor physical condition, a pace of 3 miles per hour continued for half an hour may help in reaching your target zone; if you are in excellent shape, a pace of 4 to 5 miles per hour for 30 to 60 minutes may be required.

How far and how fast?

Do not expect to walk 10 miles on the first outing. Walking, like any exercise, takes time to build stamina. A good PACE is 120 steps per minute. Begin by walking at a relaxed pace for 10 minutes, working up to 20 minutes every other day at a brisk pace. After walking briskly for 20 minutes three days a week for one month, increase walking time to 30 minutes. Repeat these 30-minute walks four or five times a week.

Shoes are also important

A pair of good shoes is the only special equipment required. Any shoes that are comfortable provide good support and do not cause blisters or calluses will do. But, whatever shoe you use should have arch supports and should elevate the heel one-half to three-quarters of an inch above the sole of the foot.

While walking, wear shoes with tongues made of that will help air circulate in the shoe. The best shoe materials are leather, canvas or nylon mesh. Allow one-fourth to one-half inch of space between the longest toe and the tip of the shoe to give the feet room to expand. An exercise shoe, just like any other shoe, must be comfortable in the store. Do not expect to "break in" an uncomfortable shoe.

Benefits of walking

During a vigorous walk, the heart beats rapidly. This rapid contraction strengthens the muscles of the heart wall, which can lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke, Deng said.

Exercise allows the heart to pump blood more efficiently, improving circulation. Walking causes the calf muscles to contract, which moves more blood from feet to head. The light exercise is also good for developing lung capacity and toning muscles in the legs, thighs and abdomen, he said.

Walking can also:

1. Relieve tension and improve one's mood and sleep
2. Lower your risk of diabetes and cancer
3. Enhance one's general attitude toward life
4. Keep the body energized

CFP Photo



Architectural legacies of five dynasties

Beijing has been the country's capital for over 1,000 years, beginning in the Liao Dynasty (907-1125). As time has passed, cities have changed, and few have done so more drastically than Beijing. But traces of the past still exist in our midst; architecture designed in dynasties gone stand among modern buildings, telling what they have witnessed through the ages.



Carvings on the Tianningsi Pagoda

Liao (907-1125)

In Liao, the southwestern Beijing was called Nanjing as a *peidu* or "another capital," since there were five capitals at the time. The political center changed with the season; in winter, the emperor, his family and most of the nobles would move to Nanjing.

Some Liao-era tombs and steles were discovered in suburban Beijing, but the most famous Liao structure is the Tianningsi Pagoda in the Tianningsi Temple.

Tianningsi Pagoda

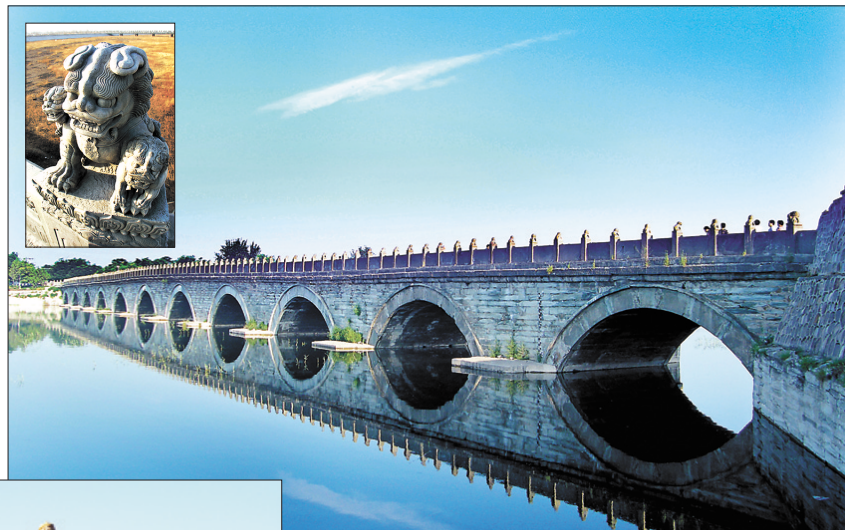
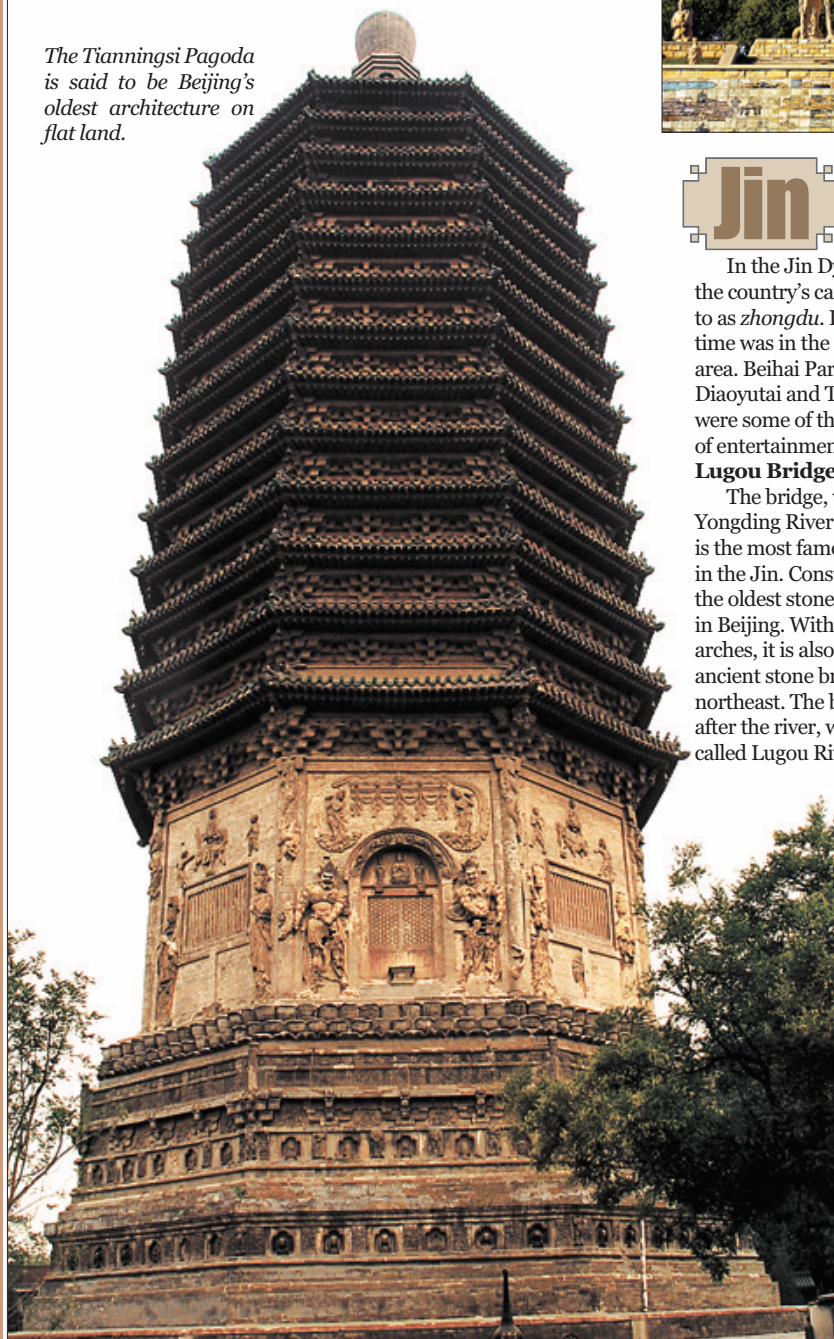
The Tianningsi temple, located in Xuanwu District, was built in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), while the pagoda was added in the Liao Dynasty. At the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368), the temple was destroyed in a fire that erupted during

the war, but the pagoda was preserved. The temple was rebuilt in early Ming (1368-1644).

The pagoda is said to be Beijing's oldest structure on flat land. It was built in 1083, according to research conducted by Liang Sicheng, a well-known architect. It is 13 stories high and made of solid brick. Carved dragons, Buddhas and other Buddhist figures adorn its body.

Getting there: Beibinhe Lu, Guang'anmen Wai, Xuanwu District (Take buses 19, 42, 46 or 716 and get off at Guang'anmen Bei stop)
Open: 9 am - 4 pm
Admission: Free

The Tianningsi Pagoda is said to be Beijing's oldest architecture on flat land.



Lugou Bridge is well-known for its numerous lion sculptures. CFP Photos



Yuandadu City Wall Park

Jin (1115-1234)

In the Jin Dynasty, Beijing, as the country's capital, was referred to as *zhongdu*. Its center at the time was in the Guang'anmen Nan area. Beihai Park, Fragrant Hill, Diaoyutai and Taoranting Park were some of the emperor's places of entertainment and relaxation.

Lugou Bridge

The bridge, which crosses the Yongding River in Fengtai District, is the most famous structure built in the Jin. Constructed in 1189, it is the oldest stone united-arch bridge in Beijing. With 10 piers and 11 arches, it is also one of the longest ancient stone bridges in China's northeast. The bridge was named after the river, which used to be called Lugou River.

The bridge became well-known because of the Lugouqiao Accident in 1937, during The War of Resistance against Japan. The bridge is equally known for its lion sculptures, around 500 of them, each with different expressions and poses. Beijingers say it is difficult to get an accurate number of the sculptures because you can always find more hidden somewhere after you think you have counted them all.

Liaojin Chengyuan Museum

Another structure typical of Jin architecture is the Liaojin Chengyuan Museum, which was built on the ruins of the Jin water-supply line and opened to the public in 1995. The museum is in

an irregular polygon shape, with gray walls and a roof covered with gray tiles. The museum features relics and photographs that show how the city looked in the Liao and Jin dynasties.

Lugou Bridge

Getting there: Take buses 309, 748, 339, 642 or 971 and get off at Kangzhan Diaosuyuan.

Liaojin Chengyuan Museum
Getting there: 41 Yulinli, You'anmen Wai, Xuanwu District (Take buses 19, 59, 122, 717 or 800 and get off at Caihuiyong or Daguan Yuan).

Open: Daily except Monday, 9 am - 4 pm
Admission: Free

Yuan (1206-1368)

In Yuan, Beijing was referred to as *dadu* or the "big metropolis." The emperor's palace is what we now know as the Forbidden City. The city walls of that era have given rise to a park, yet still remain the best legacy of the dynasty.

Yuandadu City Wall Park

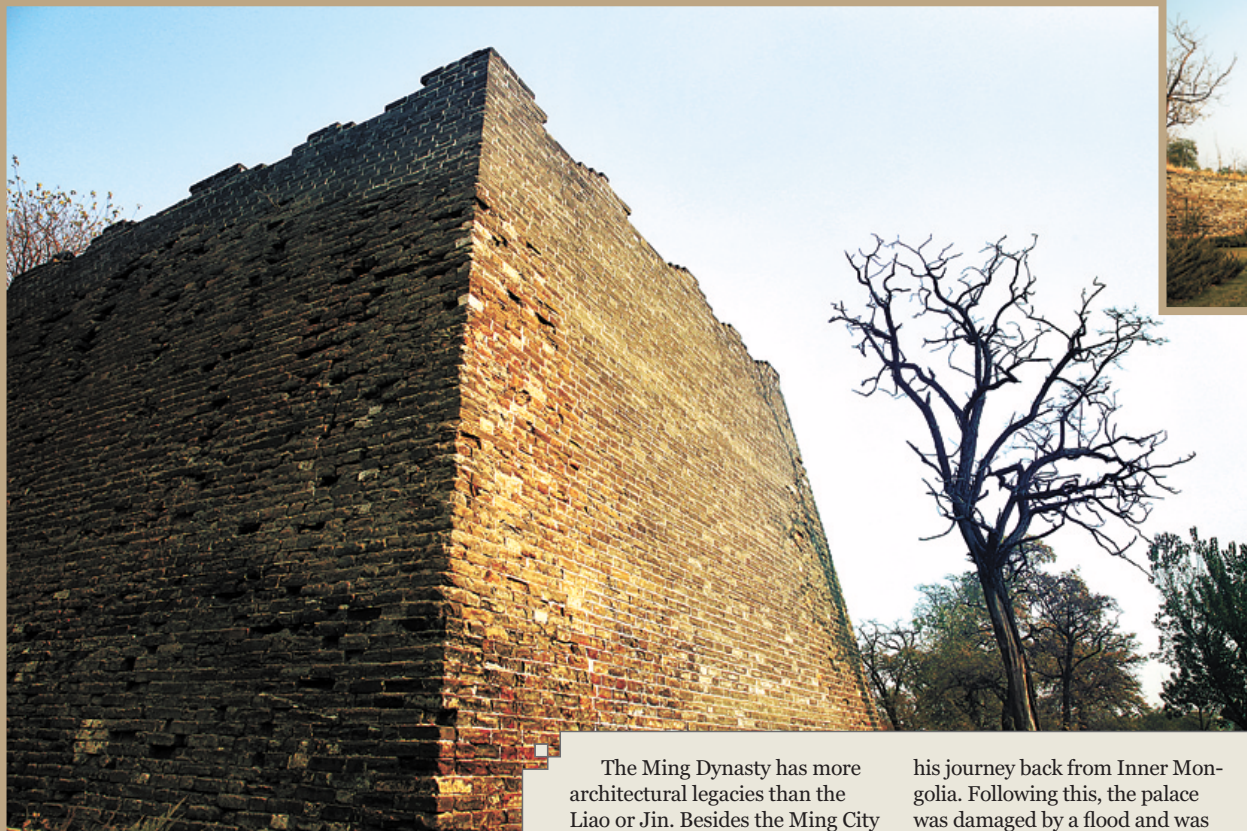
The park is built on the ruins of the Dadu city walls, which runs 9 kilometers, crossing Chaoyang and Haidian districts. It is the biggest band-shaped park in the city, and is also called Tucheng Park, because locals used to refer to the northern part of the wall as Tucheng.

The Mongolian leader Kublai Khan (1260-1294) built Dadu City over a period of 18 years. The city walls used to be over 28 kilometers long, and took 9 years to build, reaching completion in 1267. The Yuandadu ruins are considered an important phase of the city's development.

Getting there: The park is huge and one option is to get off at Mudanyuan via buses 16, 21, 47 or 690. Visitors can also take Subway Line 10 to Mudanyuan or Shaoyaoju, which in turn may be reached by buses 419 and 379.

Continued on page 21...

... continued from page 20

Ming City Wall Park
CFP Photo

Ming (1368-1644)



The Ming Dynasty has more architectural legacies than the Liao or Jin. Besides the Ming City Wall Park, another place worth visiting is Gonghuacheng, which served as a residence for the emperor and his family whenever they went on an outing.

Gonghuacheng

Gonghuacheng, in Changping District, was built in 1421 by the third Yuan emperor, Zhu Di, after he moved the imperial capital back to Beijing. The palace, also called Shaohecheng, was damaged in a flood in 1436 and repaired in 1538. In 1900, during the Boxer Rebellion, it was again ruined by foreign Allied Forces.

Zhu, who became ruler in 1403, was the first emperor to live in the Forbidden City, and established a solid foundation for the Ming Dynasty's subsequent development. Zhu often led the army to battles in Inner Mongolia, and in order to make his trips more convenient, he constructed Gonghuacheng. In 1424, Zhu died on

his journey back from Inner Mongolia. Following this, the palace was damaged by a flood and was abandoned for over a century. In 1537, Emperor Zhu Houcong ordered it rebuilt.

Because many Ming emperors were buried in what is now called the Ming Tombs in Changping, defense of the area became important. Gonghuacheng became a place for Ming emperors to rest on their way to war or to worship their ancestors. It was also an important traffic route for people traveling out of Beijing.

Gonghuacheng, which is square-shaped, has four gates with the imperial living quarters at the center. Only the four gates remain, the best preserved of which is the south gate. Not far from the south gate is the Nansha River, where Qing-Dynasty Empress Cixi liked to fish.

The palace, which had three entrances and hundreds of rooms, was built on a high plat-

form to avoid flooding. A middle school has been erected in its ruins. The palace structure is gone, but stones from the building can still be seen on the school's playground.

The Ming City Wall Park

Locals are more familiar with the Ming City Wall Park, in Chongwen District, which features Beijing's remaining Ming city walls. The wall, built in 1419, was 40 kilometers long, but only a 1.5-kilometer section has survived the centuries. The turret on the city wall is the largest existing in the country.

Gonghuacheng

Getting there: No public transportation can take visitors directly to the ruins. To save on cab fare, take Bus 345 to Shahe, then get a taxi to Gonghuacheng. Ming Chengqiang Park
Getting there: Take buses 25, 43, 59, 434, 674 or 820 and get off at Dongbianmen.
Admission: Free

① Gongwangfu

② Nanxincang

CFP Photos

Qing (1616-1911)

The last Chinese dynasty, the Qing has the most architectural traces left in Beijing. The Summer Palace and Yuanmingyuan served as two of the royal family's leisure retreats. Gongwangfu, or Prince Gong's Mansion, the most completely preserved Qing-era princely residence, was opened to the public last August. The life of the imperial family and nobility are revealed in these places.

Gongwangfu

Gongwangfu used to be the residence of famous officials including He Shen, said to be the richest and most corrupt in the Qing Dynasty; and Prince Yonglin, a brother of Emperor Jiaqing. Historical and cultural

relics are displayed in the mansion's museum.

The luxurious and intricately designed mansion has living quarters and a garden. When He Shen built it, the area was known as an abode of common people. In reaction, He constructed an enormous residence and filled it with treasures, resulting in a building characteristic of the architecture during Emperor Qianlong's reign.

Prince Yonglin, the mansion's second owner, made the place even more opulent. For instance, he paved the roofs with green glazed tiles. When another prince, Gongqin, occupied it, he added yet more dec-

orations, more pavilions and buildings, and more plants. But in the early 1900s, the main building, Yin'an Hall, was damaged in a fire.

Nanxincang

Nanxincang used to be one of the 13 grain depots for the royal family during the Qing Dynasty. Nanxincang, Jiutancang, Fuxincang and Xingpingcang were in the same yard in what is the Dongsishitiao Bridge at present.

Nanxincang, an important grain depot, was built in accordance to the military's standards for city walls, using big bricks. The wall measured 1.5 meters at its thickest, and the temperature inside the building



Gonghuacheng in Shahe Town

remained the same throughout the year.

The depot has kept its original name, but has been transformed into a center for art and leisure, with galleries and theaters renting out spaces.

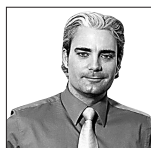
Gongwangfu

Getting there: 14 Qianhai Xi Jie, Dongcheng District. (Take buses 13, 42, 107, 111, 118

and 810 and get off at Beihai Beimen. Then, walk heading south for about 20 minutes.)
Open: 8 am - 5 pm
Admission: 60 yuan per person
Nanxincang
Getting there: It is on the southwest corner of Dongsishitiao Bridge. (Take buses 113, 406, 115, 118 or 701 and get off at Dongsishitiao.)

(By Jackie Zhang)

When does a job interview begin?



By Morry Morgan

My friend Wang Wei was running late for a job interview in Beijing. Under normal circumstances he would have taken the subway. From Dongzhimen to Guomao, where the interview was based, would only require one change of the subway line. However, on this day he decided to taxi it. This way, he thought, he could mentally prepare himself on the way. Unfortunately, it seemed, that on that day many others had also chosen to forgo the subway.

Wang Wei waited in a cue in front of his apartment waiting for an empty taxi, habitually glancing at the hands on his watch as the meeting time drew nearer.

When an empty taxi eventually pulled up in front of his office, Wang was frustrated and bad-tempered. The taxi ride didn't help. The roads were jammed, and the air conditioner was broken. When Wang eventually reached the Guomao building, he had only minutes to spare and he looked a mess.

Jumping out of the taxi, he threw 20 yuan at the driver, not waiting for the change or receipt, and ran into the building. His tie flapped over his shoulder, and his hair was matted to his face in perspiration. Sliding to a halt inside the foyers Wang spied the elevator, and darted in its direction. He tapped the 'up' button, as his head turned left and right hoping to see one of the shaft doors open. Unfortunately for him, over forty meters above, a dormant elevator was just coming to life and beginning its slow decent.

Time passed slowly. Wang paced

from left to right. What seemed like hours passed, and finally his agony was broken by the "ding" of the arriving lift. Even before the door was fully open, he was running through, almost knocking over a young woman who was exiting, carrying files.

"Sorry!" he managed to mumble in embarrassment as the woman huffed in disgust.

Turning quickly, Wang's eye's focused on the bank of buttons before him, searching for the button for the nineteenth floor.

"Come on, come on. Where are you?", he said under his breath. "Ah! There you are!"

The nineteenth button lit up under his finger, and instinctively he reached for the 'close' button.

"Come on! Come on!" He had two minutes to spare. Why were the doors taking so long to move? This was going to be tight. And then a voice shouted from outside the lift.

"Wait a moment! Hang on!"

Wang looked through the narrowing gap to see a man running towards him.

"Sorry," he thought to himself, and continued jabbing at the "close" button. The doors sealed and Wang Wei was left facing his own flustered reflection. Sweat trickled down his face, the knot of his tie was half open, and the bottom of his shirt protruded over his trousers.

But when the door on the nineteenth floor opened with a "ding," a calm, relaxed and well groomed Wang Wei walked casually from the lift. He turned right, and walked towards the open door of his prospective employer's office. He even had a smile on his face. He had done it!



ClarkMorgan Corporate Training
Beijing Guangzhou Hong Kong Nanjing Shanghai Shenzhen Suzhou Tianjin
www.clarkmorgan.com admin@clarkmorgan.com Free call: 800 820 5501



CFP Photo

In mid-stride, Wang announced that he had arrived.

"Hi there," he said with a smile, "I'm here for Mr. Huang for a job interview. I'm Wang Wei."

"Okay, Wang Wei," said the receptionist, "He'll be with you in a moment. He hasn't returned back from lunch yet." Wang couldn't believe his luck.

"Please take a seat," she finished. Wang turned and sat down in the plush couch. He reached for a magazine on the side table and took no notice of the figure as it dashed past him and the receptionist, and into the office behind. The only sound was the tapping of a keyboard as the receptionist completed an E-mail. Minutes passed.

"Hello, Wang Wei?" came a voice.

Wang turned and looked up to face a man; somehow familiar.

"Oh, you're Wang Wei?!" continued the voice. There was a sudden change

of tone. "I don't have any time for you." The condescending tone was not lost on Wang. "You can leave."

When did Wang Wei's interview begin?

The question of 'when does an interview begin' is posed at the beginning of our HR training sessions.

"When you introduce yourself to the HR manager," say some.

"When you announce your name."

"When you walk into the room."

The responses from trainees, before they hear the story of Wang Wei, vary. What's consistent is that they are all incorrect. By now you've probably figured out that Wang Wei's 'Mr. Huang' was also the same man running for the elevator, 'Mr. Wait a moment! Hang on!' So when did Wang Wei's interview begin?

The elevator, not the boardroom.

Morry Morgan is the General Manager of ClarkMorgan and a Sales & Negotiation trainer.

Hot Spring Resort

Jiuhua Shanzhuang

The Jiuhua hot spring originates 1,230 meters underground where water temperatures stay around 40°C. It is rich in micro-elements such as strontium, lithium and metasilicic acid, which promotes circulation and boosts metabolism. The unstable micro-elements have an outstanding healing effect on various skin diseases.

Jiuhua has 21 types of hot spring baths and 40 pools in various sizes. These include an Herbal Bath, Elephant Pool and Wine-tasting Pool.

Where: Xiaotangshan, Changping District
Tel: 6178 2288

Web: jiuhua.com.cn

Yujinxiang Hot Spring Garden Resort

Adjacent to the Capital International Airport, Yujinxiang Hot Spring is accessible by private and public transportation. The water originates 3,000 meters below ground and remains heated to 65°C.

Its indoor water park – Morui Water World – is Beijing's largest. It has 56 water sport activities for children, four different



Wendu Shuicheng

Located 20 kilometers to the north of Beijing, Wendu Shuicheng has five hot spring wells with depths of 3,000 meters or more at a steaming 79°C. The daily mineral-rich water output exceeds 10,000 cubic meters. It can accommodate 1,200 persons in its 35 hot spring tubs, six private indoor spa pools and 40 massage compartments.

Where: Zhenggezhuang Cun, Beiqijia Zhen, Changping District

Tel: 8178 1111 or 8888

Web: wendushuicheng.com

sauna rooms and 21 spa pools.

Where: Jinzhan Yujinxiang Garden, Dongwei Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8433 7403 or 8104

Web: bjyujinxiang.com

Longmai Hot Spring Village

Longmai Hot Spring Village is near the Great Wall and Ming Tombs, making it an excellent choice for tourists. With its indoor and outdoor hot spring baths, guests can spend all day walking the Great Wall and return to Longmai for a soothing soak. Its large indoor hot spring center is done

up to look like the tropics with several water amusements. Over 30 outdoor hot spring pools are scattered throughout its bamboo thicket. Its hot spring corridor is an eyecatcher with its classical architectural style.

Where: Xiaotangshan, Changping District

Tel: 6179 4673 or 4525

Web: longmai-wenquan.com

Huashuiwan Magnetic Spa Resort

Located in Shunyi District, Huashuiwan Magnetic Spa Resort is a unique natural magnetic hot spring resort. Its water is rich in minerals and popular for its purported curative qualities which work on rheumatism, arthritis and heart disease, in addition to benefiting the skin. Water is pumped from 1,800 meters below ground at a spa-ready temperature to avoid losing essential ingredients. Its exclusive magnetic elements improve the physical properties of the water and are extremely good for one's health.

Where: 99 Beigao Lu, Gaoliying Zhen, Shunyi District

Tel: 6945 6668

Web: huashuiwan.cn

Fengshan Hot Spring Resort

Beijing Fengshan Hot Spring Resort's natural environment is the perfect place to relax your body and soul. Its expansive spring area features 72 pools with various functions. The water, pumped from 3,800 meters underground, is rich in micro-elements and minerals. It helps control refractory diseases, such as arthritis, nervous disorders and rheumatism.

Where: 10 Mangshan Lu, Changping District

Tel: 6071 1188 or 3847

Web: fsdj.cn



Aviation



British Airways Launches New Elemis Club World Amenity Kit

British Airways has relaunched its Club World business class amenity kits with a new range of luxury products to ensure passengers arrive at their destination refreshed.

At the new Elemis travel spas in Terminal Five, Club World passengers can enjoy a 15-minute well-being treatment in a state-of-the-art Intelligent Massage Chair at the hands of an Elemis therapist. Passengers who purchase a Club World return ticket to London or Europe by February 28 can get a free companion ticket with the purchase of a regular regular ticket priced at 3,550 yuan or more.

Tel: 5879 7544

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Gan Tian at gantian@ynet.com.

Lace news that is so juicy

By Zheng Lu

My friend Lin Fang works for a foreign company in town, and because of her regular interaction with English speakers, she is proud of her proficiency in the language. When I saw her early this week, however, she surprised me by saying, "When I'm not sure about the meaning of an English word, I check the dictionary first before blurting it out." This was not her way of doing things, so I probed about how the change came about.

Lin said that last Tuesday, she went out for lunch near the office with female colleagues. As soon as they were seated at the restaurant, they began talking about things they saw on TV recently.

"Did you see Xiao Shenyang sing last night? He was really funny!" someone commented about the comedian's performance at the Lantern Festival Gala on TV the night before. Suddenly, people began talking all at once about Xiao, who has recently become very popular.

Lin and her colleagues excitedly shared all the information they had on Xiao. "He is so good-looking, but I heard he's married," one woman said. Another quickly added that "he has a 3-year-old daughter." Another chimed in, "He and his wife apparently spilt up once before they got married."

They were talking so animatedly that other colleagues who were at the same restaurant stopped by their table. "What big news has gotten you ladies so excited about? Fill me in," Jim, a colleague from California, said.

"We're talking about lace news," Lin said, all smiles.

Jim looked a bit surprised. "You ladies thinking of going into the clothing business? Or is this a new fashion trend?"

Lin could not understand how the conversation had gotten off track. "What clothing business? What new trend?" she said.

In the confusion, the conversation came to a standstill. Then Sally, a colleague who studied in the US, came to the rescue. "You two are actually talking about the same thing," she said. "Lin, I think what you mean is 'gossip' or 'juicy news.'"

She then turned to Jim. "Lace news' is the literal English translation of the Chinese word for gossip. Lace news came about because of the way gossip news items were laid out on newspapers: Articles were bordered by lace-like design to attract readers' attention. Later, the word became synonymous with sensational news or affairs concerning famous people, especially entertainers," Sally said.

"I see, the Chinese version is really visual," Jim said. "Well, if you hear of any more juicy news, don't hesitate to wring the news, so the flow of juicy hearsay will come out," he said.

Lin, together with everyone else, laughed. But inside, she was so embarrassed, and vowed from that time on to carry a small dictionary wherever she went.



CFP Photo

Blacklist

Beijing Today has come up with Blacklist, a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then this page is your new best friend. Watch out for it each week.

Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. 10th year anniversary

What does "anniversary" mean? It means "the yearly return of a special event." Saying "10th year anniversary" is like adding feet to a drawing of a snake, as a Chinese saying goes. We say "the 10th anniversary of the founding of the association," never "the 10th year anniversary of the founding of the association." For the 100th anniversary, you have the word "centennial" and for the 200th anniversary, you have "bicentennial."

2. PLA Army exhibition

As PLA stands for the People's Liberation Army, it is redundant to say "PLA Army." The phrase can be reworked as "an exhibition by the PLA." Similarly, you will not say "NGO organizations" or "ICBC Bank."

Native speaker: Penny Turner

1. 10th year anniversary

Anniversaries commonly refer to the annual recurrence of a date marking a notable event. But anniversaries are not always measured in years: think of new sweethearts who every month commemorate the date they became a couple. Think of them saying, "It's our 6th month anniversary today!" It is pretty much like birthdays: new parents count their baby's age in months – until they get past the first, at most the second, year. But if "anniversary" is used in a context that clearly says "years," then there is no more need to repeat "year," like Professor Zhu explained.

2. PLA Army exhibition

You may wonder who makes such a mistake that only requires common sense, yet this is a common writing error. I have seen unpolished articles by Chinese news reporters in which they write things like "Huangshan Mountain" or "Huanghe River." To avoid making such errors, review your translation of proper nouns or abbreviations (like PLA and NGO) to see if there are redundancies.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please take a picture and send it to gantian@ynet.com together with your name and address.

No turning over, please



By Tiffany Tan

They say "a picture is worth a thousand words." In this case, it is worth four: the sign can do away with the English translation and be the better for it. Come to think of it, you can even get rid of the Chinese words since the picture says it all: Do not sit on the railing or Do not climb over the railing. The fact that people can see the steep drop helps bring the message across.

The Chinese word *fanyue*

means "to cross," which is an acceptable translation if you are in a chase scene of an action movie and somebody needs to shout, "Do not dare cross the line." One of the definitions of the character *fan* is "to turn over," which explains the root of the mistake. The words, again, bring to mind scenes from action movies in which the stars are perched on the edge of a cliff while trying to evade the bad guys and the hero tells the heroine, "Do not move an inch."

RocknRolla (2008)



Movie of the week

Guy Ritchie is free of Madonna and back in the director's seat. The talented British director showed off his brilliant ideas in his first two movies *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch* 10 years ago, and built a reputation as one of the coolest directors. But Ritchie fell into the shadow of his pop star wife and his three movies after the marriage received no positive reviews.

RocknRolla does nothing new, instead returning to Ritchie's early style: fast paced, witty dialogue; complex, interwoven plot threads; and smart, rapid editing. And most importantly, it is not a movie about rock music but a mountain of Cockney crime stereotypes, which is Ritchie's favorite source of inspiration.

Synopsis

When a Russian mobster orchestrates a lucrative real estate scam in London, every criminal in the city wants a piece. Greed is the universal language, and everyone from unrelenting crime boss Lenny Cole to street-smart criminal One Two, corrupt accountant Stella, and unpredictable punk rocker Johnny Quid seem to speak it fluently. The double crosses multiply and every gun they have is fired. Only the lucky few escape trouble.

Scene 1

(Archie, the number two in Lenny Cole's gang, introduces the story and its main characters.)

Archie (A): People ask a question. What's a RocknRolla? And I tell them it's not about drums, drugs and hospital drips. Oh, no. There's more there than that, my friend. We all like a bit of the good life. Some, the money, some, the drugs. Others the sex game, the glamor or the fame. But a RocknRolla, oh, he's different. Why? Because a real RocknRolla wants the f---king lot.

My name's Archie, formerly known as Archibald. I work for a man called Lenny Cole. And Lenny Cole has the keys to the back door of this booming city. Let me give you an example of how Lenny works his magic.

Two years ago, this property cost 1 million pounds. Today, it costs 5 million. How did this happen? Attractive tax opportunities for foreign investment ... restrictive building consent and massive hedge-fund bonuses. London, my good man ... is fast becoming the financial and cultural capital of the world.

London is on the rise. Property value has gone one way: up. And this has left the natives struggling to keep a **foothold (1)** in the property ladder. I can't teach you how to skin a cat ... but I can tell you a lot about the **money in bricks and mortar (2)**.

Scene 2

(Johnny Quid talks about life to his friend Pete while at the same time, Lenny and Uri are talking about the missing lucky picture and the robberies of Uri's money.)

Johnny (J): You see that pack of Virginia killing sticks on the end of the piano?

Pete (P): Yes.

J: All you need to know about life is retained within those four walls. You wouldn't know anything, would you? You will notice that one of your personalities is seduced by the illusions of grandeur. A gold packet of king size with a regal insignia. An attractive implication toward glamor and wealth. A subtle suggestion that cigarettes are indeed your royal and loyal friends. And that, Pete, is a lie.

L: Excuse me? Are you trying to say something?

U: I'm not trying. I am saying something.

J: Your other personality is trying to draw your attention to the flip side of the discussion. Written in boring, bold, black and white, is the statement ... that these neat little soldiers of death, are, in fact, trying to kill you. And that, Pete, is the truth.

L: I think you forget who you're talking to, you insolent bastard. I think you forget where you are, you f---king immigrant.

Scene 3

(Roman and Mickey, former manager of rock star Johnny Quid talk about the rocker and his fake death on the newspaper.)

Roman (R): You read this?

Mickey (M): What?

R: "Singer extraordinaire, Johnny Quid fell off a boat," they said. "Missing, assumed dead," they say.

M: Our Johnny?

R: How many rock stars by the name Johnny Quid do you think there are in the universe?

M: Only thing he fell off is his **junkie (3)** spoon. He's no deader **than** the shoes you got on. He'll be **gearing himself up (4)**, happy as a clam in a fisherman's net. June, how dead is Johnny?

June: If he's dead, that's the third time this year.

M: Rockers like that never die. They just wither and give me pain.

Scene 4

(Lenny Cole meets Uri Omovich, the Russian billionaire, for the first time. Uri lends his lucky picture to Lenny and the Cockney complains to Archie after the meeting.)

Lenny (L): Nice to see you, Uri.

Uri (U): Good. Come and take a seat. Excuse me if I am hasty, but I have a busy day.

L: Oh, that's all right.

U: Sit. I can see we are very much alike, you and I, Lenny. We like to get things done. What's it going to cost me?

L: First, let me make it clear exactly how we can help you benefit from this deal. Without me, you'd be waiting five to 10 years ... before you got permission to erect your arena. Secondly, with British law **as it so stands (5)** ...

U: Lenny, how much?

L: Seven million euros.

U: I expect the guarantee that I have consent within six months and no **red tape (6)**.

L: Oh, you got it.

U: Consider it done.

A: You all right, Len?

L: Yeah.

A: Because you're looking a bit pink.

L: Get us some water and a wet wipe live-o, will you, Turbo? He tried to poison me, the dirty Cos-sack. Look, stop **messing about (7)**, just give me the bottle.

A: How is the billionaires' club?

L: Well, I tell you what, Communism didn't slow him down, did it? I'll tell you what, Arch. We've hit the big time here. Well, what's wrong? Where's the famous Archy smile?

A: You gotta watch yourself with this lot. I mean, times are changing. They ain't no respecters of the **old school (8)**.

(By Wang Yu)



Vocabulary

- foothold:** firm or secure position that provides a base for further advancement
- money in bricks and mortar:** money earned from real estate
- junkie:** drug addict
- gear himself up:** here it means "he will be exited"
- as it so stands:** as something is now
- red tape:** unnecessary official rules which bog things down
- mess about:** to waste time or to do something ineffectually
- old school:** here it means those early gangsters in London